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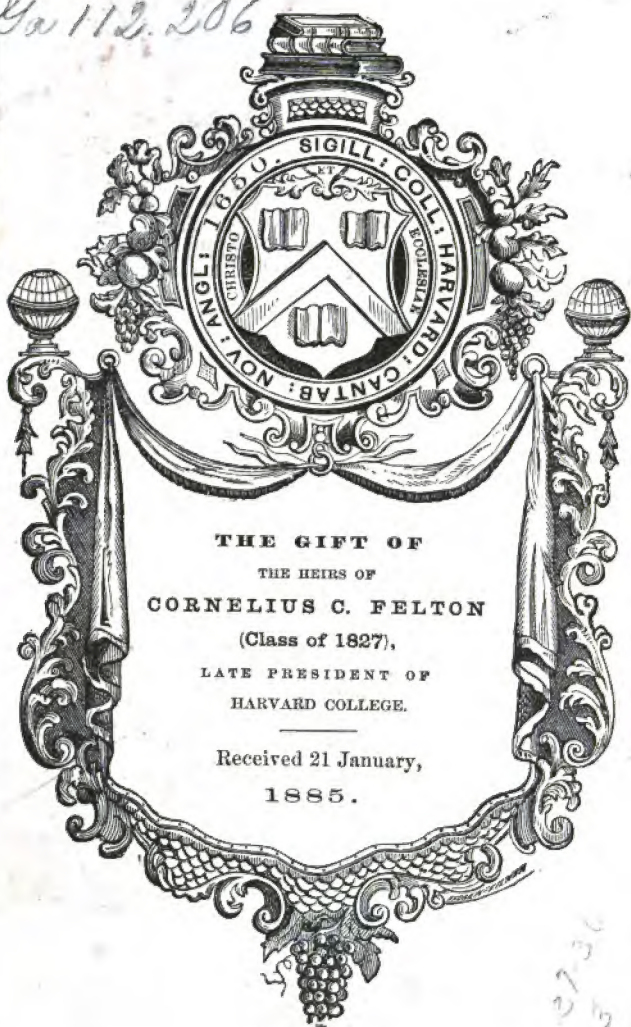
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THE  
ETHICS OF ARISTOTLE

ILLUSTRATED WITH  
ESSAYS AND NOTES

BY  
SIR ALEXANDER GRANT, BART., M.A.  
*FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.*

*three*  
IN ~~TWO~~ VOLUMES.

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CONTAINING  
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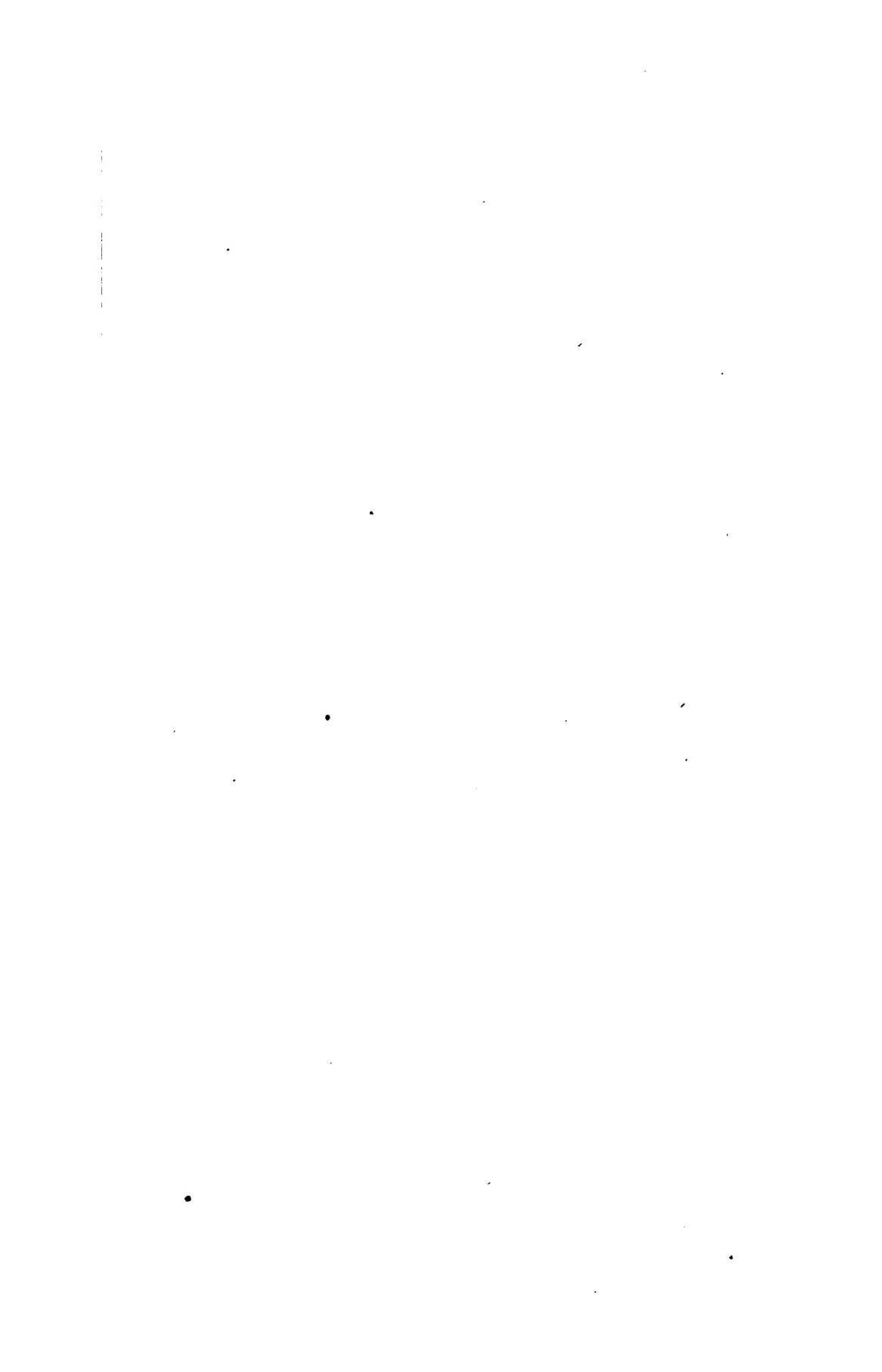
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE present volume as constituting a sort of *Prolegomena* to the *Ethics* of Aristotle, is published separately. The second volume, containing a text of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, with notes critical and explanatory, is now nearly half through the press, and will, it is hoped, follow shortly.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE following pages will declare their own object. Experience has proved that notes upon the text are insufficient to explain all the difficult questions connected with the *Ethics* of Aristotle. These Essays are an attempt to give a more scientific account of the subject, especially by applying to it the 'historical method.' They have taken the privilege of Essays to be on some points suggestive, rather than exhaustive. It remains for the author to say a few words on the sources from which he has derived some of his materials.

Having been for some time familiar with the various German monographs bearing on the works of Aristotle, and with the able *resumé* of the subject by Professor Brandis, in his *History of Greek and Roman Philosophy*, I have given in Essay I. such a general view as the suggestions of these different writers and my own reflections have led me to adopt. I am indebted to Professor Spengel for his now almost universally received theory as to the relation to each other of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Eudemian Ethics*, and the *Magna Moralia*; but I have gone beyond him in concluding that Books V., VI., VII. were written by Eudemus. I owe to Professor Brandis the results of

his very learned analysis of the Story of Strabo; to him and to other writers a criticism of the List of Diogenes Laertius. The general theory of the history of morals given in Essay II., has grown up out of an acquaintance with different histories of ancient philosophy. Far the most suggestive and instructive, as also incomparably the greatest work on this subject, I have found to be Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. To borrow philosophy from this work seems to me (like borrowing poetry from Shakspeare) to be a debt that is almost unavoidable. I have derived several details relating to the early Greek morals from M. Renouvier's excellent little work, entitled, *Manuel de Philosophie Ancienne*. I have also not hesitated to draw upon the able articles in Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography*.

With regard to the Sophists, I have been led into details by a disagreement with the views promulgated by Mr. Grote in his celebrated chapter on the subject. I am indebted to the learned papers of Mr. Cope in the *Cambridge Journal of Classical and Sacred Philology*, for some notices of 'the Rhetoric of the Sophists.' In Essay III. I have taken from Professor Zeller the result of his discussions upon the genuineness of the *Laws* of Plato. My list of obligations would be incomplete, were I not to record my gratitude to the philosophical lectures of my much-honoured friend, the Rev. Benjamin Jowett, Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford.

These lectures I listened to ten years ago in Balliol College; they were the first introduction into Oxford of the study of the history of philosophy. Those who have had the privilege of hearing them will feel, what I cannot hope here to convey, the sense of their great excellence and importance. I must also thank the kindness of my friend, Mr. Edward Poste, Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, whose Aristotelian learning has been of the greatest service to me, especially at the beginning of my labours; and I must conclude by offering my thanks to my friend, Mr. James Ferrier, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews, for the profound metaphysical point of view, which in many a conversation on philosophy, he has shown me.

OXFORD, *October 10, 1857.*



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## ESSAY I.

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### *On the Genuineness of the Nicomachean Ethics, and on the Mode of their Composition.*

IN studying the philosophy of Aristotle, we encounter at the outset a very difficult question with regard to the genuineness, the form, and the literary character of the works in which that philosophy is contained. The question in its full scope and real earnestness, is one of recent origin, though sceptical theories concerning the text of Aristotle have been at various times mooted, as, for instance, by Strabo and by Patricius. We stand now in a very different position with regard to Aristotle from the middle ages, and even from the scholars of the Renaissance. Once the whole body of what are called the writings of Aristotle were received with equal reverence, though not by any means equally studied. A sort of dogmatic completeness, and almost a verbal nicety of finish was thought to pervade the whole; and we accordingly find Thomas Aquinas<sup>1</sup> discussing why it was that Aristotle makes an apology in his *Ethics* for attacking the theories of Plato, while in the *Metaphysics* he attacks them without any such apology. Aquinas decides the reason to have been that in a treatise on morals due attention to good manners was particularly necessary. Such criticism appears ludicrous to our times. Our eyes have become more and more opened to the incomplete and fragmentary character of Aristotle's remains. In what

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Commentarii in Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea*,  
VOL. I.

are called his works we know that we have a considerable nucleus of the actual writing of Aristotle himself. Also we have a concretion of Peripatetic philosophy, some of it nearly contemporary with Aristotle, other parts far later. Also, even in books that are most essentially genuine, we can recognize the hand of the editor; we can trace what is most probably posthumous recension, joinings added of parts before dis-united, references introduced; completion as far as possible, or the semblance of completion, given to what was really in itself left incomplete.

Almost all we know of the life of Aristotle is contained in a quotation made by Diogenes Laertius (v. 9) from the chronology (*Χρονικά*) of Apollodorus. This Apollodorus is praised by Niebuhr as a trustworthy writer; he appears to have lived about 140 B.C. He gives the following dates of the leading events in the life of Aristotle. 'That he was born, Olymp. 99. 1 (B.C. 383). That he met Plato and spent 20 years in his company, 17 years of them continuously. That he came to Mytilene Ol. 108. 4 (B.C. 344). That in the first year after the death of Plato, he went to Hermeas and abode with him 3 years. That he came to Philip, Ol. 109. 2 (B.C. 342), when Alexander was 15 years old. That he came to Athens, Ol. 111. 2 (B.C. 334). That he held his school (*σχολάσαι*) in the Lyceum 13 years, and then went to Chalcis, Ol. 114. 3 (B.C. 321), where he died of a disease, about 63 years old.' The different parts of this sketch have been filled up in most cases with little certainty. With regard to Aristotle's career as an author, no information has reached us, but the general opinion has been that his works were composed during his second stay at Athens,—that is, while he was holding his school in the Lyceum, during the last 13 years of his life. Internal evidence, on which we have chiefly to rely, is on the whole in favour of this supposition, as the works that have come to us

belong to *one* period of the philosopher's mind; his system and terminology, peculiar as it is, appears throughout fully formed. It is only in minute points that a development of ideas can be traced. Another argument for the same hypothesis is, the unfinished character of almost everything that bears the name of Aristotle. All is characterized by vastness of conception, but also by a falling short in the attainment of what had been designed. Connected with this torso-like appearance of the philosophy as a whole, there is so great an absence of art in many portions of the works of Aristotle, as to have given rise to the opinion that we possess not his own writings, but only the notes of his disciples. This theory was first promulgated by Julius Scaliger about *some* of the works of Aristotle, but subsequently has been more or less vaguely entertained about his works in general, and especially about the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

'The waters' are said to be 'from the exhaustless spring of Aristotle, but the pitchers to have been supplied by others.'<sup>2</sup> The truth or falsehood of this theory seems to be a question of degree. There is no denying that the notes or *compendia* of Peripatetic disciples, more or less dressed up, do go to form part of the bulk of the Aristotelian works; for instance, we shall see that the *Eudemian Ethics* were a composition of this character. Also, we no doubt owe the redaction of many of Aristotle's writings to the care of his disciples. But beyond this, the theory must not be extended. The unfinished style of the writing, the looseness or inaccuracy of quotations, the apparent familiarity of the allusions, and the occasional men-

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<sup>2</sup> Julius Scaliger, in *Arist. de Plantis*, i. p. 11, 'Cujusmodi commentationes a discipulis exceptos ejus nomine circumferri videtis. Etenim qui Commentarii contra Zenonem et

Xenophanem tanquam ab illo conscripti leguntur, illius quidem inexhausti fontis perennes aquas sapiunt, alveos tamen aliorum esse manifestum est.'



tion of 'hearers,' must not lead us to conclude in a sweeping manner that we have only notes from lectures. The scientific depth and subtlety of the discussions in many parts, and their tentative rather than conclusive attitude, is incompatible with this assumption. Above all, we cannot blind our eyes to the intense individuality which seems to mark the style of Aristotle, which is no mere reproduction, but the words and the sentences of the very man himself. Even his obscurity is characteristic, and differs from the obscurity of a disciple misunderstanding and garbling the philosophy of his master. Nor must too much stress be laid on the word ἀκροᾶσθαι. Partly, from a sort of ancient tradition, it corresponded to our conception of reading; partly (as in the name φυσικὰ ἀκροάσεις) it was used to denote more intimate and systematic study of a subject, as opposed to popular knowledge. Partly, Aristotle in making use of it, had in view his own oral instructions in the gardens round the temple of the Lycean Apollo. But it must not be supposed that it would be an entire account of his works to say that they are notes for lectures any more than notes from lectures. Aristotle was designing to complete the whole sphere of knowledge; he was absorbed in his zeal for the accumulation of scientific results and the perfection of scientific form, about artistic form and literary structure he was indifferent, and death arrested his manifold beginnings. His philosophy, which was to cover the world, was springing and growing up all at once, and nothing perfect. Let us now picture to ourselves a set of philosophical treatises—all elaborately conceived, but all more or less incomplete, to have been, subsequently to the death of their author, we cannot tell how soon or how simultaneously—brought forth, perhaps out of disjointed and separately existing memoranda, and put together for publication, and we have perhaps the most adequate notion that can be formed of the genuine parts of the so-called

works of Aristotle. This conception perfectly agrees with the testimony of Cicero,<sup>3</sup> who speaks, on the one hand, of certain exoteric dialogues composed by Aristotle, on the other hand, of the 'Commentaries' which he 'left behind him.' The exoteric dialogues appear to have been a few works in a popular vein of thought, finished in point of style, and exhibiting what Cicero praised as a 'golden stream' of diction. These may in all probability have been earlier compositions, suggested by the example of Plato. The 'Commentaries' have alone descended to us: harsh and incomplete in style, unequal in thought, sometimes obscure from brevity, at other times prolix and self-repeating, devoid of all artistic treatment, setting at nought the restrictions of grammar—these yet, in their rude and prematurely arrested form, outside which we can often discern the patchwork of other hands, contain the philosophy and the very words of Aristotle, and have more influenced the thought of the world than any other uninspired works.

We have now taken the first step towards a proper point of view with regard to the literary history of the works of Aristotle. The next step will be to convince ourselves of the uncertain character of all ancient testimony on the subject, so as to feel that internal evidence and criticism of the works themselves can be our only sure guide. Let us advert then to the celebrated story of the Fate of the Writings of Aristotle, given first by Strabo,<sup>4</sup> and afterward repeated by Plutarch. Strabo relates (*apropos* of his account of Scepsis, a town in the Troas) that the library and MSS. of Aristotle, being in the possession of Theophrastus, were by him bequeathed to one Neleus of Scepsis, whose heirs, to elude the book-collecting zeal of the Kings of Pergamus, concealed these treasures in a vault,

<sup>3</sup> *De Finibus*, v. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Strabo*, xiii. 1, 418.

There they remained for ages, till finally corrupted with damp and worms, they were sold for a considerable sum to one Apellicon of Teos. By him they were brought to Athens, where he caused copies of them to be taken, himself filling up on conjecture the gaps in the text, not however happily, for he was more of a book-collector than a philosopher. Soon after the death of Apellicon, Athens was taken by Sylla, and this library was seized and brought by him to Rome. There Tyrannio, the grammarian, obtained permission to arrange the MSS. At the same time the booksellers had numerous copies made by very careless transcribers. Hence it came about (says Strabo) that the earlier Peripatetics, being deprived of all the really philosophic works of Aristotle, were reduced to mere rhetorical commonplaces in their philosophizing; and the later ones, when the books came again to light, were generally compelled to resort to a conjectural interpretation of them, owing to their corrupt condition.

The same story is repeated by Plutarch,<sup>5</sup> who probably took it from Strabo, and who adds to it the further statements, that Tyrannio put almost the entire MSS. into shape; that Andronicus of Rhodes, getting numerous transcripts made, gave publicity to a generally-received text of Aristotle; finally, that it was for no want of personal zeal or ability, but from the loss of the original writings, that the Peripatetic school had previously declined.

This curious history, if literally true, would represent to us the text of Aristotle as absolutely corrupt, frequent gaps having been caused by physical circumstances, and these so unskilfully filled up as to destroy the sense. It would represent to us that we possessed the works of Aristotle as a whole, but that they were defective in the parts. Internal evidence

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<sup>5</sup> Plutarch. *Vit. Sulla*, c. 26.

does not bear out this account. An examination of the works as we possess them does not show them to be in the condition which Strabo would imply. The *Characters* of Theophrastus indeed, and parts of the *Eudemian Ethics*, exhibit this kind of corruption, but not the works of Aristotle in general. The touches of an editorial hand often appear, but not as supplying lacunæ. There is no trace of the conjectures of Apellicon. When we turn to external evidence, we find that there must have been some ground for the narrative of Strabo. Strabo was the scholar of Tyrannio and the friend of Andronicus (whose share, however, in the business he does not mention); he therefore had the history of Sylla's MSS. on the best authority. The adventures recorded may have happened to the autographs, or some of them, of Aristotle and Theophrastus. But restrictedly to these. Strabo deserts history for imagination when he says that Aristotle's philosophical writings were lost to the earlier Peripatetics. Investigations tend to prove, as far as anything can be proved about so dark a period, that all the important works of Aristotle were known to the world during the 230 years which elapsed between the death of Aristotle and the capture of Athens by Sylla. Many of these works were made the basis of fresh treatises and commentaries by his immediate followers, Theophrastus, Eudemus, Phantias, &c. It seems certain that a mass of writings under his name, some genuine, others spurious, were purchased by Ptolemy Philadelphus for the Alexandrian library. His logical works must have been known to the Stoics, who made a development of his principles. The allusions to him in Cicero<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> As for instance in the *Topics*, I. i-3. Trebatius had seen the *Topics* of Aristotle in Cicero's library at the Tusculan Villa, and had asked him what the book contained. Cicero, not to avoid trouble (as he says), but

thinking it more for the interest of Trebatius, advises him to read the work himself, or else consult a certain learned rhetorician. Trebatius, however, was repelled by the obscurity of the writing, and the rhetorician, when

show an amusing mixture of knowledge and ignorance. They show that Cicero himself had no scientific acquaintance with Aristotle's philosophy—indeed that he possessed the most superficial and external knowledge of the subject. But he speaks as if claiming to know the philosophical books, and as if there was a general acquaintance with them existing among the Greek rhetoricians and educated Romans of the day. His way of speaking is quite incompatible with Strabo's account of the recovery of these books. Nor do the earlier Greek commentators mention it. Boethius alone speaks of Andronicus as 'exactum diligentemque Aristotelis librorum et judicem et repertorem.'

On the whole then this famous story contributes hardly anything to our knowledge of the Aristotelian text, except perhaps the following two points. (1) It tells us of a recension by Tyrannio and Andronicus. This accordingly stands over against the Alexandrian copies, though to which of these two families our present edition of the text belongs, it seems impossible to pronounce. (2) It shows us how entire was the ignorance of Strabo as to the literature of philosophy. He speaks without knowledge and without criticism of the isolated fact that had come beneath his notice. We see with how great caution we have to receive each separate testimony coming to us from periods so uncritical.

Another instance of the negligence of antiquity is to be found in the catalogue of the works of Aristotle, given by

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consulted, said 'he knew nothing about Aristotle.' Cicero thinks this not to be wondered at, since even the philosophers hardly knew anything about him, though they 'ought to have been attracted by the incredible flow and sweetness of the diction.' Cicero now proceeds to give Trebatius

an account of the *Topics* of Aristotle, but he evidently is only acquainted with the first few pages of them. In *De Fin.* v. 5, where he quotes the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he shows that he has never read them, for he praises them as making happiness independent of good fortune.

Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives of the Philosophers* (v. 22). This catalogue exhibits at first sight an immense discrepancy from the edition of Aristotle to which we are accustomed. We miss the names of the great works, such as the *Physical Lectures*, the *Ethics*, the *Metaphysics*. Instead of these, we find a mass of apparently small and separate treatises enumerated, often apparently popular works in the form of dialogues, and even where more scientific works are specified, there seems often to be rather a coincidence of subject than an identity of the books with those which we possess. By a rough computation, it appears probable that the list of Diogenes would correspond to a mass of writings about four times the size of what remains at present, for Diogenes specifies the sum total as amounting to 445,270 lines, which at the rate of 10,000 lines to an alphabet or ream, would give forty-four reams, whereas ten reams is the utmost extent of the present aggregate. Granting, however, that the exoteric writings and much beside are lost, the question is, How can we reconcile what we have remaining with the titles given by Diogenes? Take, for instance, the names of ethical works scattered about in this list. *Περὶ δικαιοσύνης δ'. περὶ ἡδονῆς α'. περὶ τἀγαθοῦ γ'. περὶ φιλίας α'. ἠθικῶν ε'. περὶ ἡδονῆς α' (repeated). Περὶ ἐκουσίου α'. θέσεις φιλικαὶ β'. περὶ δικαίων β'.* Can we find anything in what we call Aristotle corresponding to these names?

If the list in question were to be relied upon, it would follow that Aristotle wrote nothing but comparatively isolated treatises, which have been amalgamated by other hands. More than one writer has accepted this hypothesis, and has attempted to find in the works as we possess them many of the treatises named by Diogenes. For instance, on this principle the *Nicomachean Ethics* may be resolved into 'four books of Ethics,' plus 'One book on the Voluntary' (introduced into

*Eth. Nic.* III.), *plus* two treatises on Pleasure, *plus* 'One Book on the Good' (corresponding to *Eth. Nic.* x.), *plus* 'One Book on Friendship,' and 'Two Books of Theses on Friendship' (forming *Eth. Nic.* VIII. IX.); though it would still be difficult to fit in the 'Four Books on Justice,' and the 'Two Books on the Just,' and also to find anything answering in the list to Book VI. of the *Nic. Ethics*. But even were all difficulties of detail surmounted, a broader view of the question shows us that the above-mentioned hypothesis has only the most superficial plausibility, it will not stand the test of either internal or external evidence. Certainly the authority of Diogenes is not such as by itself to weigh against probabilities. His work is a mere thoughtless compilation, written at a time when literature was in the dregs, about the end of the second century. His *débris* of anecdotes and quotations about the old philosophers is of inestimable value from the lack of other information. But every statement must be weighed by itself.

External authority at once contradicts the catalogue of Diogenes. For authors earlier than him make mention of entire works, of which he takes no notice. Not only does Cicero specify the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*De Fin.* v. 5), but also Atticus, a Platonic philosopher of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, cited by Eusebius (*Præparatio Evangelica*, xv. 4), speaks of the ethical works under their present titles, as follows; αἱ γοῦν Ἀριστοτέλους περὶ τὰ ταῦτα πραγματεῖαι Εὐδήμειοί τε καὶ Νικομάχειοι καὶ Μεγαλῶν Ἠθικῶν ἐπιγραφόμεναι κ.τ.λ. Internal evidence is also equally decisive against our considering the works of Aristotle to be an amalgamation of smaller treatises complete in themselves. Here and there, it is true, we find subjects worked out in a separate manner, the different parts seem often to have too little relation to the whole. That various portions of the *Ethics*, for instance, were

composed piecemeal and at different times, there seems to be every reason for believing. But at the same time there is another element in Aristotle which the list of Diogenes would ignore—namely, the idea of vast completeness and organic unity which presents itself constantly as an idea, though by no means realized throughout his works. However apparent may be the separateness of different parts of his system, it is much more apparent that every science is opened with a comprehensive plan, and proposing to itself an extended scope which is never carried out. Whatever therefore may have been the origin of this catalogue, it stands completely beside our present Aristotle. The most probable conjecture is that it was copied from the backs of the rolls in some library, without reference to the contents of the rolls themselves. The fragmentary condition of Aristotle's works, and his separate mode of writing, no doubt sometimes favoured this mode of labelling, and transcribers may for shortness sake have separated that which the author intended to be inseparable. Another ancient catalogue which exists agrees in general with the present arrangement of the books. It is Arabian, but is merely a translation of the catalogue given by a certain Ptolemæus, a Peripatetic philosopher of unknown date, who wrote on the life and works of Aristotle.

More and more we are led to rely on internal evidence alone in deciding any question concerning the works of Aristotle. Let us then apply these principles in discussing the genuineness and criticizing the composition of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The latter point depends on analysis of the work itself, the former implies some consideration of the fact that among the reputed works of Aristotle there appear also two other ethical treatises, (not to mention the small and evidently spurious fragment *De Virtutibus et Vitiis*), namely, the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Magna Moralia*. We have seen



before, that as early as the second century these three ethical treatises were ranked, under their present names, among the works ascribed to Aristotle. And the first point that would naturally strike the reader would be to ask an explanation of these names. Antiquity is ready, as usual, with an answer of the most hasty and uncritical description, for we find Porphyry,<sup>7</sup> in his *Prolegomena* to the *Categories*, gravely stating, that 'Aristotle's ethical works consisted of a treatise addressed to Eudemus his disciple; another, the Great Nicomacheans, to Nicomachus his father; and a third, the Little Nicomacheans, to Nicomachus his son.' Strange to say this guess or tradition, from whatever source derived, has been echoed pretty constantly since; and in almost all commentaries on the 'Little Nicomacheans,' it is taken for granted that they are inscribed by Aristotle to his son Nicomachus. Samuel Petit was perhaps the first to see an improbability in the story. His objection was based upon the fact that Nicomachus must have been a young child at the time of the composition of the book. Petit remedies the difficulty by finding out in the list of Archons one named Nicomachus, and some other great man of the name of Eudemus, to whom Aristotle's books might be worthily dedicated; an explanation quite in accordance with the ideas of the seventeenth century.

If, unfettered by tradition, we look the question in the face, we see at once that the account given by Porphyry is absurd; that in the first place, it is in the highest degree improbable that Aristotle should have inscribed his books to his disciple and to his son; and in the second place, if he had done so, that the names Ἠθικὰ Εὐδημεία and Ἠθικὰ Νικομάχεια would not have implied this, still less could Ἠθικὰ

<sup>7</sup> Porphyry. *Proleg.* p. 9. διὰ μὲν γὰρ τὸ ἠθικὸν γεγραμμένα αὐτῷ εἰσι τὰ Ἠθικὰ πρὸς Εὐδῆμον μαθητὴν, καὶ ἄλλα πρὸς Νικόμαχον τὸν πατέρα τὰ μεγάλα Νικομάχεια, καὶ πρὸς Νικόμαχον τὸν υἱόν, τὰ μικρὰ Νικομάχεια.

*Μεγάλα* have meant *Ethics* addressed to his father. (1) We do not find any work of Aristotle's composed with this sort of personal reference, for the *Ῥητορικὴ πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον* has been proved to be spurious. Far less in the *Ethics* themselves is there any trace of a purpose of this kind. The stern impersonality<sup>8</sup> of Aristotle and the purely scientific character of his inquiries, are quite opposed to the idea of a book composed for, or inscribed to his son. Such an idea would imply a false view of the whole tendency of the treatise, which is not to be regarded as a practical compendium, but rather as a scientific treatise on moral subjects. It is indeed the first treatise on *Morals*, written in uncertainty as to how far they could be separated from *Politics*. It is characterized with the freshness of a novel enquiry, and contains nothing hortatory. Its unfinished appearance also renders it doubtful whether it ever appeared in its present form during the life of Aristotle. This idea of inscribing a book of *Morals* to a son is essentially of later date and is suitable to Cicero. But it is especially remarkable that Cicero knew nothing of this story—of the *Nicomacheans* being addressed to Nicomachus. He knew them by their name as *Ethics of Nicomachus* and doubted whether they were by the father or the son (*De Fin.* v. v.) (2) Indeed it is only natural that *Ἠθικὰ Νικομάχεια* should mean *Ethics of, or by, Nicomachus*, and *Ἠθικὰ Εὐδήμεια* *Ethics by Eudemus*. Other works by Eudemus are quoted with a similar title; cf. Alexander Aphrod. on the *Topics*, p. 70. ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῶν ἐπιγραφομένων Εὐδημείων Ἀναλυτικῶν (ἐπιγράφεται δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ Εὐδήμου ὑπὲρ τῶν Ἀναλυτικῶν.) Those who wish against all probability to translate *Νικομάχεια*, as if it

<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the most remarkable places in which this impersonality relaxes itself are, *Eth. Nic.* i. 6, 1., where his friendship for the Plato-

nists is alluded to; and *Soph. Et.* 33, where he speaks of his being the first to have laid the foundation of logic.

were πρὸς Νικόμαχον, appeal to the parallel word Θεοδέκτεια, mentioned in the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle, III. ix. 9. Αἱ δὲ ἀρχαὶ τῶν περιόδων σχεδὸν ἐν τοῖς Θεοδεκτείοις ἐξηριθμῶνται. They assume that this means 'the *Rhetoric* inscribed to Theodectes.' But in fact, the contents of this book and the meaning of its name are equally unknown. In all probability, it was merely a summary by Theodectes, embodying some of the doctrines of Aristotle.

The name Μεγάλη Ἠθικὰ is an apparent anomaly, for in point of bulk, this work is the least of the three treatises. Spengel thinks that the name may have been given in reference to the intended completeness of its scope. Perhaps, however, the most probable account may be, that the name is due to a merely external accident, to the humour of a copyist or librarian. The work may have been labelled 'Great Ethics,' to distinguish it from some adjacent *Ethics* in the library, just as we find the *Hippias μείζων* and *ἐλάττω* of Plato distinguished by these epithets from each other.

It would seem at the first glance in the highest degree improbable, that Aristotle, engaged as he was in pushing out philosophical analysis, enquiry, and speculation in all directions, and who, from the immensity of his undertakings, was forced to leave the greater part of his works uncompleted, should have been at the labour of composing three treatises on the same subject, with the same scope and the same results. And this is the character of the three treatises in question. There is therefore strong *a priori* probability against their being all the work of Aristotle. When we ask further what can be learnt from the titles they bear, we find that the name Μεγάλη Ἠθικὰ tells us nothing, being itself an anomaly that requires explanation; and that the other two titles would imply, that there have come down to us two expositions of the ethical system of Aristotle, the one drawn

up by Nicomachus, the other by Eudemus. These two expositions might stand on the same footing with each other, or again, might have a widely different character. The relation between Aristotle and his expositor or editor might in such cases vary almost indefinitely. It is possible on the one hand that the editorship consisted in a mere mechanical transcription. On the other hand it is possible that we have a mere nucleus or a mere collection of episodical fragments properly belonging to Aristotle himself, while form, method, and the conception of the whole are due severally to Nicomachus or Eudemus—or thirdly, the thoughts alone may be Aristotelian, and these may have been recast by the expositor and not left wholly uncoloured by his own modes of thinking.

Various are the shades of these hypotheses, which might hold good according as internal evidence should enable us to decide. Fortunately, the first point to be established is one on which general consent and internal probability entirely coincide—namely, that the Nicomachean treatise is to be preferred above the Eudemian, as well as above the *Magna Moralia*. Neither by the Greek scholiasts, nor by Thomas Aquinas, nor by the succeeding host of Latin commentators have the two latter treatises been deemed worthy of illustration, while the *Nicomachean Ethics* have been incessantly commented on. This tacit distinction between the three works was the only one drawn till the days of Schleiermacher, who mooted the question of their relation to each other. He at once pronounced they could not all belong to Aristotle, and seeing clearly the irregularities in the Nicomacheans, he was led to conclude that the *Magna Moralia* was the original work and the source of the other two. This conclusion, however, has been set aside by the deeper criticism of Spengel,<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ueber die unter dem Namen des Aristoteles erhaltenen ethischen Schriften, (in den *Abhandl. der Philos. philol. Klasse der K. Bay. Akad.* 1841).

whose theory is now universally received in Germany, and may be looked upon almost as a matter of certainty. Spengel considers that in the *Nicomachean Ethics* we have on the whole the work of Aristotle himself; in the *Eudemians* a work by Eudemus of Rhodes, based on the former; in the *Magna Moralia* a résumé of both these preceding works, compiled by some later Peripatetic.

Any one who compares the opening sentences of the three treatises will be struck at once with a difference of manner. The *Nicomachean* commencement—Πᾶσα τέχνη καὶ πᾶσα μέθοδος, ὁμοίως δὲ πρᾶξις τε καὶ προαίρεσις, ἀγαθοῦ τινὸς ἐφίεσθαι δοκεῖ—is quite in the style of Aristotle. It reminds us of the beginning of the *Post. Analytics*—Πᾶσα διδασκαλία καὶ πᾶσα μάθησις διανοητικὴ ἐκ προϋπαρχούσης γίνεται γνώσεως—or of the *Metaphysics*—Πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει. It is a universal proposition forming the first step in an elaborate argument. This argument bases the whole of *Ethics* upon the Aristotelian conception of τέλος, on the practical chief good, or happiness, demonstrated to be the final cause of life. The question then follows—What science is to treat of this all-important conception? The answer is ‘Politics,’ which answer belongs to a Platonic point of view, and shows that *Ethics* had not yet been separated from *Politics*. Considerations of the method of this science follow. All is systematic and evinces a deep and comprehensive, but at the same time a tentative, view of the subject.

The *Eudemian Ethics* commence quite differently. Ὁ μὲν ἐν Δῆλῳ παρὰ τῷ Θέῳ τὴν αὐτοῦ γνώμην ἀποφηνάμενος συνέγραψεν ἐπὶ τῷ προπύλαιον τοῦ Λατῆρου, διελθὼν οὐχ ὑπάρχοντα πάντα τῷ αὐτῷ, τό τε ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ ἡδύ, ποιήσας.

καλλίστων τὸ δικαιοτάτων λῶστον δ' ὑγιαίνειν  
πάντων δ' ἡδίστων, οὗ τις ἐρεῖ τὸ τυχεῖν.

Ἡμεῖς δ' αὐτῶ μὴ συγχωρῶμεν· ἡ γὰρ εὐδαιμονία κάλλιστον καὶ ἄριστον πάντων οὐσα ἡδιστόν ἐστιν. In this opening we can trace several characteristic peculiarities. (1) There is an apparent attempt at style, the book is begun with an attractive quotation, which is alien from Aristotle's manner. (2) We recognise the quotation as having occurred in *Eth. Nic.* i. viii. 14. There, however, it is only mentioned in passing as one of the λεγόμενα with which Aristotle compares his definition of the chief good. Here it is amplified, and quoted with more circumstance. This is characteristic of the *Eudemean Ethics*, which often play a useful part in furnishing learned references and more explicit quotations for the *Nicomacheans*. For instance, they give in amplified form the saying of Anaxagoras on Happiness, and of Heraclitus on Anger; and a corrected statement of the doctrine of Socrates on Courage. (3) We miss the tentative attitude, and gradually developed argument. In the place of them we find a disposition to set forth results. Above all we miss what is most philosophical in Aristotle's system, the conception of the End, the identification of this with the chief good; the definition of Politics and of their method. The *Eudemean Ethics* separate Ethics from Politics, but do so in an arbitrary way without enquiring on what grounds the individual can be treated apart from the state.

The *Magna Moralia* open with grammatical distinctness, but with some confusedness of thought. Ἐπειδὴ προαγορεύμεθα λέγειν ὑπὲρ ἠθικῶν, πρῶτον ἂν εἴη σκεπτόν τινος ἐστὶ μέρος τὸ ἦθος. Ὡς μὲν οὖν συντόμως εἰπεῖν, δοκεῖ οὐκ ἄλλης ἢ τῆς πολιτικῆς εἶναι μέρος. Ἔστι γὰρ οὐθέν ἐν τοῖς πολιτικοῖς δυνατὸν πρᾶξαι ἄνευ τοῦ ποῖόν τινα εἶναι, λέγω δ' οἷον σπουδαῖον. Surely Aristotle would never have used this argument, that 'the character is part of Politics, because one cannot act in political matters without exhibiting some moral

character.' Aristotle's connexion of Ethics with Politics was for greater and deeper reasons; partly it was due to the history of Grecian moral science, which commenced with questions about the nature of justice, the law, the state, &c.; partly it was from a grand conception of the state as a living whole, including the individual as a subordinate part. The writer of the *Magna Moralia* understands nothing of this. He evidently writes at a later period, when practical Ethics have attained an independent footing, and he tries to go back and reproduce Aristotle's point of view. He speaks afterwards as if standing as the representative of the Peripatetic<sup>10</sup> philosophy. Thus, after mentioning the former systems of Ethics, those of Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, he adds, οὗτοι μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἐφήψαντο καὶ οὕτως, ἐχόμενον δ' ἂν εἴη μετὰ ταῦτα σκέψασθαι τι δεῖ αὐτοὺς λέγειν (I. i. 4). So too I. 35. 26, ἀλλὰ βέλτιον ὥς ἡμεῖς ἀφορίζομεν. These expressions, however, are a mere echo of Aristotle's way of speaking. Spengel observes that the use of ὑπερ in ὑπερ ἠθικῶν (I. c.) is not in accordance with the practice of Aristotle, who employs περὶ in similar cases. It is found however in Theophrastus. We presently meet with the words πρῶτος μὲν οὖν ἐνεχείρησε Πυθαγόρας. Aristotle always says οἱ Πυθαγορεῖοι.

Passing on from these first sentences, the more we examine the treatises in question, the more we are confirmed in accepting Spengel's hypothesis with regard to them. Let us then

<sup>10</sup> In one passage, which is at first sight startling, he seems to quote *Eth. Nic.* II. 2. 6. ὅτι δὲ ἡ ἐνδεῖα καὶ ἡ ὑπερβολὴ φθείρει, τοῦτ' ἰδεῖν ἔστιν ἐκ τῶν ἠθικῶν. Δεῖ δ' ὑπερ τῶν ἀφανῶν τοῖς φανεροῖς μαρτυρίαις χρῆσθαι. Spengel, however, acutely remarks that the true reading must be not

ἐκ τῶν ἠθικῶν, but ἐκ τῶν αἰσθήσεων, confirming this conjecture by the words of Stobæus, who, with regard to the Peripatetic Ethics, says, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐνδεῖαν τοῦτου τοῖς ἐκ τῶν αἰσθήσεων μαρτυρίαις χρῶνται. This writer is therefore only borrowing, not quoting, from Aristotle.

consider the hypothesis as provisionally established, and proceed to take such a general survey of the nature and contents of the two subsequent and collateral Aristotelian treatises, as may serve to show their relationship to Aristotle's own ethical system. Let us commence with a brief notice of Eudemus and the *Eudemian Ethics*.

Eudemus of Rhodes was a leading scholar of Aristotle. We have no particulars of his life. Aulus Gellius gives a silly story of Aristotle deciding in favour of Theophrastus over Eudemus as his successor, by saying, that he 'preferred Lesbian wine to Rhodian.' Simplicius<sup>11</sup> has preserved a more important notice, namely, a passage of the work of Andronicus Rhodius on Aristotle and his writings, which contains a fragment of a letter of Eudemus to Theophrastus, asking for an accurate copy of a MS. of the fifth book of Aristotle's *Physics*. This testifies to the editorial labours of Eudemus. Asclepius<sup>12</sup> records that Aristotle committed his MS. of the *Metaphysics* to Eudemus, who was dissatisfied with the form of the work, by which its publication was delayed; that on the death of Aristotle some parts of the MS. were missing, and that these had to be completed from the other writings of Aristotle by his survivors. We know that Eudemus<sup>13</sup> and Theophrastus, and others of the Peripatetics, set themselves

<sup>11</sup> Simplic. ad Aristot. *Phys.* fol. 216, a, 7. This passage is referred to by Stahr in his article on Eudemus, in Smith's *Dictionary of Biography*, but is not given by Brandis in his *Scholias* upon Aristotle.

<sup>12</sup> Asclepius *Proem.* in Arist. *Metaphys.* (Brandis, *Schol.* in Arist. p. 519) γράψας τὴν παρούσαν πραγματείαν ἐπεμψεν αὐτὴν Εὐδήμῳ τῷ ἐταίρῳ αὐτοῦ τῷ 'Ροδίῳ' εἰτα ἐκεῖνος ἐνόμισε μὴ εἶναι καλὸν ὥς ἐτυχεν ἐκδοθῆναι εἰς

πολλοὺς τηλικαύτην πραγματείαν. ἐν τῷ οὖν μέσῳ χρόνῳ ἐτελεύτησε καὶ διεφθάρησαν τινα τοῦ βιβλίου· μὴ τολμῶντες δὲ προθεῖναι οἰκοθεν οἱ μεταγενέστεροι διὰ τὸ πόλῳ πᾶν λείπεσθαι τῆς τοῦ ἀνδρός ἐννοίας, μετήγαγον ἐκ τῶν ἄλλων αὐτοῦ πραγματειῶν τὰ λείποντα, ἀρμύσαντες ὡς ἦν δυνατόν.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Ammonius on the *Categories* (Brandis, *Schol.* in Aristot. p. 28). οἱ γὰρ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ Εὐδήμος καὶ Φασίας καὶ Θεόφραστος κατὰ ἕληλον τοῦ διδασκά-



to compose treatises on subjects already treated of by Aristotle. In this they were probably actuated by a desire of systematizing and making known his philosophy. They no doubt endeavoured to complete what was obscure, and to supply links in the arguments derived from their recollections of the oral teaching of the philosopher himself. They thus furnished a sort of paraphrase<sup>14</sup> or commentary. Of the writings of Eudemus, the following<sup>15</sup> are mentioned by ancient Greek authorities; a *History of Geometry*, a *History of Astrology*, *Analytics*, *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, *De Dictione*, *Physics*, and lastly *Ethics*. These *Ethics* are quoted by Aspasius in a Scholium on *Eth. Nic.* VIII. p. 141, λέγει δὲ καὶ Εὐδήμος καὶ Θεόφραστος ὅτι καὶ αἱ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν φιλίας ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς γίνονται, ἢ δι' ἡδονὴν ἢ διὰ τὸ χρήσιμον ἢ δι' ἀρετὴν. The reference is to *Eth. Eudem.* VII. x. 9.

The *Eudemian Ethics* have suffered more from time than the *Nicomacheans*. The text is notoriously corrupt. Parts of the work are evidently lost, as for instance the eighth book refers to a previous mention of *καλοκαγαθία*, which is not now to be found. And there are also numerous unfulfilled promises. As they stand, these *Ethics* consist of eight<sup>16</sup> books, of which the last is incomplete. Their contents may be said roughly to be a reproduction in other words of the contents of the *Nicomachean* treatise.

Books I. and II. correspond with *Eth. Nic.* I.—III. 5.

Book III. corresponds with *Eth. Nic.* III. 5.—IV.

λουν γεγραφήκασι κατηγορίας καὶ περὶ ἑρμηνείας καὶ ἀναλυτικῆν.

<sup>14</sup> Simplicius on the *Physics*, fol. 279, a. καὶ ὁ γε Εὐδήμος παραφράζων σχεδὸν καὶ αὐτὸς τὰ Ἀριστοτέλους, τίθησι, κ.τ.λ.

<sup>15</sup> The authorities for these works are given by Fritzsche in his edition of

*Eth. Eud.* (Ratisbon, 1851.) *Prol.* p. xv.

<sup>16</sup> Printed as seven books in Bekker's edition. But in some MSS. the last three chapters are placed separate, and they certainly stand by themselves.

Books IV. V. VI. are *word for word identical* with *Eth. Nic.* v. vi. vii.

Book VII. contains in a compressed form *Eth. Nic.* vii. and ix.

Book VIII. is a mere fragment, of which the beginning is wanting, and it is not probable that the author meant to end his whole work where this present portion ends. It contains entirely new matter, namely, certain *ἀπορίαι* as to the possibility of misusing virtue, and as to the nature of good fortune, and a discussion upon *καλοκαγαθία*.

The most remarkable point about the contents of the *Eudemian Ethics* is the absolute identity of three books with three in the *Nicomacheans*. Hence arises the difficult question of the authorship of these books. To which of the treatises do they originally belong? This question may be reserved for discussion in connexion with the composition of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. We have spoken of the one treatise being in general a reproduction of the other, let us now advert to such differences and peculiarities as are discernible in the exposition of Eudemus.

First, as regards style. The phraseology and the turn of the sentences are, for the most part, a close approximation to the writing of Aristotle. An abundance of quotations, and a predominance of logical formulæ may however be observed. But the greatest divergence from Aristotle occurs at that point where style ceases to be an affair of particular words, where method and general modes of thought exert an influence. Eudemus re-arranges and restates the ethical theory, and here we at once perceive a difference, for while the parts are more summarily and dogmatically stated, about the whole there seems a sort of confusion, so that it is almost impossible to hold in one's head the thread of one of the Eudemian books. Also there are places where Eudemus is no longer

reproducing Aristotle. He sometimes enters upon questions and ἀπορίαι of his own, as, for instance, with regard to the voluntary (*Eth. Eud.* II. 7), whether it consists in knowledge or desire.

In these places he is more indistinct, more involved, and unsatisfactory than even the obscure parts of Aristotle himself. The obscurity, too, seems of a kind which is due rather to weakness than to depth of thought, it seems to arise from an inability to maintain steadily a philosophic point of view. An instance of this latter failing occurs in the question, 'Whether does virtue make the end right, or the means?' (*Eth. Eud.* II. 11), on which we shall have more to say hereafter; and in the expression, αἱ διανοητικαὶ ἀρεταὶ μετὰ λόγου (II. i. 19), which is surely not a right mode of speaking: the moral virtues are μετὰ λόγου, the intellectual excellences are λόγοι. Already we are touching upon differences not so much of style as of philosophy. The point of view of Eudemus appears different from that of Aristotle; there are several novelties and fresh questions introduced, and there is a later and more developed psychology. The difference of point of view consists in the abandonment of what might be called the scientific context of Ethics,—the connection of the individual with the state, of happiness with the chief good, of human life with its final cause, being no longer preserved. This peculiarity has the effect of making the *Eudemian Ethics* correspond to the modern conception of a 'practical' treatise; if by practical is understood moralizing without philosophy. Another fundamental difference consists in this, that whereas Aristotle had represented contemplation as the highest human good, Eudemus seems to have set aside this idea, and to have substituted for it that of καλοκαγαθία, the aggregate and perfection of moral virtues. The aim and standard of this perfect quality he makes the service and contemplation of God,

so that the passions are to be subdued, and all external goods only chosen in so far as they may be subservient to that end, VIII. iii. 15. "Ἦτις οὖν αἴρεσις καὶ κτήσις τῶν φύσει ἀγαθῶν ποιήσει. τὴν θεοῦ μάλιστα θεωρίαν, ἢ σώματος ἢ χρημάτων ἢ φίλων ἢ τῶν ἄλλων ἀγαθῶν, αὕτη ἀρίστη, καὶ οὗτος ὁ ὄρος κάλλιστος. Εἰ τις δ' ἢ δι' ἐνδειαν ἢ δι' ὑπερβολήν, κωλύει τὸν θεὸν θεραπεύειν καὶ θεωρεῖν, αὕτη δὲ φαύλη. Ἐχει δὲ τοῦτο τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ οὗτος τῆς ψυχῆς ὁ ὄρος ἄριστος, τὰ ἥκιστα αἰσθάνεσθαι τοῦ ἄλλου μέρους τῆς ψυχῆς ἢ τοιοῦτον. Τίς μὲν οὖν ὄρος τῆς καλοκαγαθίας, καὶ τίς ὁ σκοπὸς τῶν ἀπλῶς ἀγαθῶν ἔστω εἰρημένον. This elevated passage enters upon a subject which we do not find discussed by Aristotle, namely, the connection between religion and life. As far as we can judge of Aristotle's opinions on this question, the above passage gives a different view from his. The words *θεραπεύειν τὸν θεόν* imply a different conception of the Deity from what we are accustomed to find in Aristotle, and the connection here made between moral virtue and theological contemplation, is opposed to the broad distinction made by Aristotle between speculation and practical life, and is more like Platonism. Also we may notice something peculiar in the formulæ here used, *ὄρος τῆς καλοκαγαθίας*, and *σκοπὸς τῶν ἀπλῶς ἀγαθῶν*.

We have already specified in passing the chief novelties introduced into the *Ethics* of Eudemus. They are (1) his questions about the voluntary, which, confusedly as they are treated, show a growth in psychology and in ethical science, for the want of a sufficiently profound theory of the individual will had been one of the chief defects in Aristotle's system; (2) his enquiry as to the relation of virtue to purpose in the moral syllogism. This is a later development than is contained in the first books, at all events, of the Nicomachean treatise; (3) his discussion of the influence of

fortune on happiness, which we find treated in a religious spirit, though obscurely; (4) his theory of *καλοκαγαθία*. These differences grafted on to the system of Aristotle are not such as to entitle the *Eudemean Ethics* to any great praise as an independent system, but they are interesting as showing the relation of the Peripatetic school to Aristotle.

The so-called *Magna Moralia* consist of two books. The conclusion of the second appears wanting. The whole presents uniformly the appearance of a *résumé* of foregone conclusions, but the writer seems to have had before him not only the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemean Ethics*, but also some other source, perhaps the writings or the traditions of Theophrastus. To this latter authority we might attribute the slight novelties that occur, as for instance, the sketch of the history of morals (i. i. 4-8); an expanded statement of the import of the word *τάχαθόν* (i. i. 10, ii. 11), which in its arid logical clearness forms a sort of Scholium upon Aristotle; some *ἀπορίαι* on justice (ii. 3); and certain other minor improvements and additions. At the beginning of Book I. the writer seems to follow Aristotle, afterwards he adheres rather more closely to Eudemus. In one case, however, where Eudemus had corrected Aristotle, namely, with regard to the doctrine of Socrates on courage, the author of the *Magna Moralia* repeats the original less correct statement. The point of view coincides almost entirely with that of Eudemus: but the writer indicates some sort of advance in stating still more dogmatically than Eudemus the freedom of the will, and with regard to the intellectual *ἀρεαί* he denies the name of *ἀρεαί* to these at all, though he discusses the intellectual qualities, substituting however *ὑπόληψις* for *τέχνη*, and throughout his writing confusing the words *ἐπιστήμη* and *τέχνη*. On the whole, the *Magna Moralia* must be regarded as a dry compendium, executed with less clearness, and exhibiting the decline of the Peripatetic

school, for the only originality here is one that exhausts itself in paraphrase and elucidation.

After these preliminary enquiries, we may now proceed to examine the treatise that bears the name of Nicomachus, which is our immediate concern. Of Nicomachus himself scarcely anything is known. Eusebius (*Præp. Evang.* xv. 2) quotes the following notice from Aristocles the Peripatetic:—*Μετὰ δὲ τὴν Πυθιάδος τῆς Ἑρμείου τελευτῇ τῷ Ἀριστοτέλει ἐγγυμένῳ Ἑρπυλλίδῃ Σταγειρίτῃ, ἐξ ἧς υἱὸς αὐτοῦ Νικόμαχος ἐγένετο. Τοῦτον δὲ φασὶν ὀρφανὸν τραφέντα παρὰ Θεοφράστου καὶ δὴ μαιρακίσκον ὄντα ἀποθανεῖν ἐν πολέμῳ.* The fact of his being educated by Theophrastus may have placed him in some connection with the MSS. of his father. But the tradition that he died while yet a youth in war, is not consistent with the notice of him by Suidas (*sub voce*), which speaks of him as a philosopher, the scholar of Theophrastus, and the author of six books of Ethics, and of a commentary on his father's physical philosophy. These 'six books of ethics' mentioned by Suidas may in all probability be a confused allusion to the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle. In Diogenes Laertius also, the title seems to have caused a confusion with regard to the authorship. *Φησὶ δ' αὐτὸν Νικόμαχος ὁ Ἀριστοτέλους τὴν ἡδονὴν λέγειν τὸ ἀγαθόν* (VIII. viii. 2). This refers to the mention of Eudoxus, *Eth. Nic.* x. ii. 1. Taking then, on the whole, this as the result of the testimony of antiquity, that though nothing certain is known of Nicomachus, the son of Aristotle, tradition agrees in coupling his name with the chief of the ethical treatises among the Aristotelian works; not (as we have already proved) as being the person to whom they are addressed, but as being in some sort redactor, editor, or expositor of the ethical system: we may proceed at once with certain confidence to pronounce that Nicomachus was not the author of the *Nicomachean*

*Ethics* in the same way that Eudemus was of the *Eudemians*. None among all the works of Aristotle is more definitely marked with the signs of genuineness than the greater part of this treatise. We have here all the qualities of an original work, the merits and the faults of a fresh enquiry; style, manner, the philosophy, the relation to Plato, all bespeak for this book the actual composition of Aristotle himself, except in certain disputed portions. And yet anything like a careful examination brings out equally clear traces of the hand of an editor.

If we take the first book and in connexion with it the tenth book from the sixth chapter onwards, we cannot but feel that here is a systematic ground-work for a science conceived as a whole. In the first book the question is stated, what is the chief good or end for man? Partly from a Platonic way of viewing the subject, partly from Greek notions in general, Aristotle identifies the end for the state and the individual, and calls his science of the chief good for man, 'a kind of Politics.' This point of view is taken up again at the close of Book X., which in fact is a transition to Politics proper. But not only do the beginning and the end of the *Ethics* coincide. Beside this, we see other evidences of system equally strong in the preconceived idea of the method of what is to follow, betraying itself in the first two books. An instance of this may be noticed in the deferring of any discussion upon the Contemplative life. Had the first book been in any sense an isolated treatise, the discussion could not have been deferred. Again, Aristotle having given his definition of Happiness, and having compared it with the theories of others, the last chapter of the book opens a methodical analysis of the different parts of that definition. This analysis is based upon a distinction between moral and intellectual excellence. The second book takes up the discussion,—defers the consideration of the

λόγος or moral standard, and gives that table of the virtues which is afterwards followed in books third and fourth. On the whole, speaking roughly, there appears at first sight perfect logical sequence from the beginning of the first book to the end of the sixth, and between the first six books and the close of Book X. Suppose we grant also that continence, pleasure, and friendship, are subjects essential to Ethics, we might then say that the whole ten books possess a systematic unity,—though in truth the existence of two separate treatises on pleasure suggests a difficulty, which some persons evade by denying that the treatise in Book VII. properly belongs to this work of Aristotle.

Further consideration must oblige us very considerably to modify these views. In the first place it soon becomes apparent, that whatever general idea of system they may contain, the *Nicomachean Ethics* cannot be regarded as a finished work of art. In the best of Plato's dialogues there is an organic unity, a sort of omnipresence of the writer's mind throughout the various parts of his work; there are subtle anticipations and subtle references backward; nothing seems redundant and nothing omitted. It would be in vain to look for anything of this kind in the *Ethics* of Aristotle. Repetitions, unfulfilled promises, wandering from the point of view, unskilful joining of parts apparently written separate,—these things induce the conviction, that if there is an element of order and of unity in this book, there is also another element of irregularity, confusion, and patch-work. Not to leave these charges unsubstantiated, it may be as well to give some instances of each, and it will afterwards remain to state what seems the most probable hypothesis as to the composition of the work.

1. Under the head of 'repetitions' may be comprehended all those parts of the book which seem unnaturally to ignore each other. The most striking instance of this is the co-



existence of the two treatises on Pleasure, which the most strenuous partisan for the unity of the *Ethics* would never be able to justify. These treatises are absolutely independent of each other, and the latter partly repeats and partly contradicts the former. But even setting this aside, even on the supposition that only one of the two belongs to this work, how are we to justify on principles of art the arguments on the connexion between pleasure and morals, which occur in the third chapter of Book II.? Would it not have been possible to find a more philosophical arrangement for this very deep and important question, the relation of pleasure to morals? Are not the arguments in Book II. shallow as regards the view of pleasure, and is not the treatise in Book X. too isolated as regards morals? Another instance of repetition occurs in Book V. where the voluntariness of an action is discussed in terms rendered unnecessary by what had preceded in Book III. It is true that there is a reference backward, v. viii. 3, λέγω δ' ἐκούσιον ὥσπερ καὶ πρότερον εἶρηται, κ.τ.λ. but this would be so natural an interpolation either of the editor or of some later hand, that no stress can be laid on it. The question is one not of external references, but of internal method and unity. So too εὐβουλία is treated of in Book VI., without any recollection of the account of βούλευσις in Book III.; and πολιτικὴ is defined and subdivided in the 8th chapter of Book VI. in a way that quite ignores the mention of Πολιτικὴ as a science at the opening of the *Ethics*. Another instance might be pointed out at the beginning of Book IX. The incidental mention there of proportion as determining value, constitutes a repetition, though a slight one, of the fifth chapter of Book V. No writer having the earlier passage present to his mind would have in this way written the later one. Lastly, it must strike the reader as at all events strange, that the account of Σοφία in Book VI. should contain no allusion to the discussion of con-

temptation, as connected with happiness, which is reserved for Book X., and that in the latter discussion, there is no reference backward to all that had before been said upon *Σοφία*. The question raised at the end of Book VI. as to whether *Σοφία* produces happiness, is quite incompatible with any recollection of the mention of the contemplative life in Book I. or any prescience of the concluding argument in Book X.

2. Unfulfilled promises and fallacious references, forward as well as backward, may be genuine, or they may be interpolated. Where they are genuine, they testify to an *idea* of method, and of an extended scope. But they equally show that the idea has not been realized, that the last hand of the writer is wanting. Where they have the appearance of interpolations, they point to the composite character of the book, and to the meddling of the editor or the scribe. The first instance of the kind seems natural and genuine. I. vii. 7. *Τούτων δὲ λεητέος ὅρος τις ἐπεκτείνονται γὰρ ἐπὶ τοὺς γονεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἀπογόνους καὶ τῶν φίλων τοὺς φίλους εἰς ἄπειρον πρόξισιν. Ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν εἰσαῦθις ἐπισκεπτέον.* This question, as to where the circle is drawn round a man within which his *αὐτάρκεια* radiates, is never reconsidered.

The next instance to be noticed occurs II. vii. 16. *Ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τούτων καὶ ἄλλοθι καιρὸς ἔσται· περὶ δὲ δικαιοσύνης, ἐπεὶ οὐχ ἀπλῶς λέγεται, μετὰ ταῦτα διελόμενοι περὶ ἑκατέρας ἐροῦμεν πῶς μεσότητές εἰσιν· ὁμοίως δὲ περὶ τῶν λογικῶν ἀρετῶν.* The first part of this programme corresponds well enough to Books III. IV. V. But it cannot be said that the last part corresponds to Book VI. For is it there discussed, how the intellectual excellences are mean states? On the whole, however, these last few words have so extremely suspicious an appearance, that we may almost confidently pronounce them not to have been written by Aristotle. The very phrase *λογικαὶ ἀρεταὶ* belongs to a later style than that of Aristotle.

Whether Nicomachus is responsible for the sentence, is a different question. Another unfulfilled promise occurs, ix. ix. 8. Οὐ δεῖ δὲ λαμβάνειν μοχθηρὰν ζῶν καὶ διεφθαρμένην, οὐδ' ἐν λύκαις· ἀόριστος γὰρ ἡ τοιαύτη καθάπερ τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτῇ. Ἐν τοῖς ἐχομένοις δὲ περὶ τῆς λύπης ἔσται φανερώτερον. Now 'in what follows' there is no question about the nature of pain, except so far as its nature is implied in its being the contrary of pleasure. Certainly there is no explanation of the 'indefinite' character of pain, though in x. iii. 1, it is argued, that pleasure is not indefinite. Probably a vague recollection of this latter point induced the editor or the copyist to introduce the reference. Viewed closely, the passage before us appears to have been written independently of Book X. A reference of another kind, suggesting some difficulty, occurs in viii. i. 7. Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐν οἰόμενοι, ὅτι ἐπιδέχεται τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τό ἥττον, οὐχ ἱκανῶς πεπιστεύκασιν σημειῶν· δέχεται γὰρ τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ ἥττον καὶ τὰ ἕτερα τῷ εἶδει. Εἴρηται δ' ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐμπροσθεν. The Scholiast on the passage observes, that something now lost appears to be referred to, *ἔοικε δὲ εἰρησθαι ἐν τοῖς ἐκπεπτωκόσι τῶν Νικομαχείων*. This is evidently a mere conjecture. Considering how separate the last words in the sentence stand, perhaps it is best to consider them not Aristotle's, but added on. Some commentators imagine that the reference is to the eighth chapter of Book II., where the mean is shown to differ in degree and also in kind from the extremes. This may have suggested itself to the mind of a person interpolating the reference. But it is too vague and indistinct a resemblance to have been really alluded to by Aristotle. What the form of the reference would lead one to expect is, an abstract logical discussion on the question, whether things differing in kind can be compared with each in point of degree.

3. Much of the *Ethics* seems written, as if the author had

first divided his subject into separate parts, and then had worked out the analysis of those parts without taking thought of their mutual relation. Thus zeal for the particular enquiries seems to overpower any consideration for the general harmonious impression. This is perhaps the extreme of the analytic tendency. The web of human life is divided into its component threads, and each thread is followed out in separation from the rest. Happiness, pleasure, virtue, wisdom, temperance, and friendship, each have their turn. At one time Aristotle seems to speak entirely of moral virtue, at another time entirely of happiness. Virtue is said to be necessary for happiness; but in the discussion of virtue, no allusion to happiness is made. For virtue, or the mean, you must have a standard in the practical reason, but when the practical reason is defined, all mention of the mean is omitted. This characteristic gives a disjointed appearance to the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Partly, it is attributable to an idiosyncrasy in the mind of Aristotle. Partly, no doubt this idiosyncrasy has been aggravated by the really unfinished state of the present work. Not only in point of method do the different parts hang ill together, but there is also an inconsistency discernible in the manner of the writing. In tone and colour the first book and the tenth seem to harmonize. These seem to have been written together. Equal, if not superior, to these, both in moral elevation and in philosophical interest, we may place Books VIII. and IX. In these four books, the prominence of the metaphysical conception *ἐνέργεια* is a token of their philosophical point of view. Books II. III. IV. seem hardly above the popular level of thought. Books V. VI. VII. are characterized by a confusion and indistinctness from which other parts of the work seem free. Books VI. and VII. are also marked by a prevalence of logical phraseology.

4. We now come to certain marks of joining and patch-

work, which are so inartificial, that they need only be set down in order to be immediately recognised. VII. x. 5.—  
 II, 1. 'The nature of continence and incontinence, and the relation of these states to one another, has now been declared. But pleasure and pain are subjects for the consideration of the political philosopher,' &c.

VII. xiv. 9. 'About continence and incontinence, and pleasure and pain, we have now spoken, and the nature of each, and how some of them are goods and some evils. Next we shall speak also about friendship.' VIII. i. 1. 'But after this it would follow to discuss friendship,' &c.

IX. xii. 4. 'Thus far then let the discussion of friendship go; it will follow to investigate pleasure.'

X. i. 1. 'But after this, perhaps the next point is to investigate pleasure.'

No one could imagine that such links as these would be employed to connect the parts of a work really written from end to end. The very collision between the beginnings and ends of books, the repetition in the first line of a fresh book of the same words which concluded the book before, is very awkward, and we do not find it elsewhere in Aristotle, though it is true that it appears in the *Eudemian Ethics*. But even passing this over, there is obviously something wrong about the arrangement of a work which first says, 'Having discussed pleasure we may now discuss friendship;' and some pages later, 'We have now discussed friendship, and it follows to discuss pleasure.' And the second treatise on Pleasure proceeds accordingly in the most naïve manner, to bring forward arguments why pleasure should be discussed, on account of the importance of the subject, and its connexion with morals, just as though it had never been mentioned before.

The above then are some of the most salient indications of disorder and incompleteness in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. No

hypothesis can entirely explain them away. You cannot, by dropping out so many chapters here and so many words there, make the work smooth and entire. The only course is to endeavour to form as fair an opinion as possible on the probable method in which Aristotle composed the work, and the condition in which he left it. And Nicomachus, or the copyists, may be answerable for the rest.

The most important question on this part of the subject is, as to the authorship of Books V. VI. VII. We have already seen, that these books occur word for word in the *Eudemian Ethics*. The question is, to which of the two works do they originally and properly belong? There have been various hypotheses on the subject. The first and most moderate is that started among the moderns by Casaubon, that the treatise on Pleasure in Book VII. is not by Aristotle but by Eudemus. This supposition, if we could accept it, would no doubt remove great awkwardness from the appearance of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. But from grounds of *à priori* probability we may safely conclude that this supposition cannot be the true one. For though it is possible to conceive that the whole of these three books may have been introduced into the one treatise from the other, and may have brought along with them a superfluous discussion on Pleasure to a work already treating of the subject; it is not possible to believe that a treatise on Pleasure should be separated from its context in the *Ethics* of Eudemus, and unnecessarily transplanted into the *Ethics* of Aristotle. Moreover, if the last four chapters of Book VII. were written by Eudemus and introduced here, how came it about that the remainder of Book VII., and the whole of Books VI. and V. written by Aristotle, were afterwards transferred to the work of Eudemus? Those who wish to operate for the benefit of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, must use the knife deeply or not at all. They must

separate three entire books, or else leave the excrescence untouched.

The second hypothesis is that adopted by a recent editor of the *Eudemian Ethics* (Fritzsch), who maintains that Book V. belongs to the work of Aristotle, Books VI. and VII. to that of Eudemus. For the same reasons as before, we may say that it is almost impossible to believe in this double transference. We can imagine that one treatise may have been left imperfect, or may have been mutilated, and that its deficiencies were supplied from the other. But it is hard to believe, without any external evidence, in the imperfection or mutilation of both works, and in a system of mutual accommodation arising out of the wants of each.

The only suppositions then which remain open to us, are either that the three books in question are by Aristotle, or that they are by Eudemus. If we can on other grounds allow them to be the work of Aristotle, there is no insuperable obstacle in the double treatise on Pleasure. We must at once conclude that *that* in Book VII. is an earlier essay, on which Aristotle afterwards improved. We might say, the treatise in Book VII. is dialectical, merely opposing the Platonists. That in Book X. is scientific, giving a more complete analysis of the subject. Instances occur in the *Metaphysics* of short discussions, which appear repeated in a more or less changed form. Of course a repetition of this kind is due to the editors of Aristotle. They were naturally reluctant to lose or omit any part of his writings. And hence it may have come about, that a treatise on Pleasure superseded and discarded by its author was afterwards revived and awkwardly grafted upon one of his works. It is not on the ground of these few last chapters that the genuineness of the whole three books is brought to an issue.

The chief arguments in favour of attributing these books to

Aristotle are—(1) The fact that they are found in his treatise, and have been constantly received as part of it, and, in fact, are required to complete it. (2) That they appear to be quoted by Aristotle himself in the *Metaphysics* and *Politics*. (3) That they are said to be completely Aristotelian in style. Against these arguments might be pleaded—(1) That they are found in the work of Eudemus. And if we attribute them to Eudemus, we shall be only applying to these books the hypothesis which some would apply to the whole treatise, or even to all the works of Aristotle—namely, that they consist of the notes of his scholars. Moreover, the very name, *Ethics by Nicomachus*, might suggest the probability that something might be found in a work so called, not coming purely and entirely from Aristotle, while the fact that these books are required to complete the system does not prove their genuineness, so much as account for their having been borrowed; especially if it turns out that they do not exactly fit, and give a seeming rather than a real completeness to the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

(2) An examination of the places where these books are said to be quoted, a little weakens the argument drawn from those quotations.

In *Metaphys.* I. i. 17, Book VI. appears to be referred to. Εἴρηται μὲν οὖν ἐν τοῖς ἠθικοῖς τίς διαφορὰ τέχνης καὶ ἐπιστήμης καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν ὁμογενῶν· οὗ δ' ἕνεκα νῦν ποιούμεθα τὸν λόγον, τοῦτ' ἐστίν. κ.τ.λ.

In *Politics* III. ix. 3, Book V. seems quoted, ὥστ' ἐπεὶ τὸ δίκαιον τισὶν, καὶ διῆρηται τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ἐπὶ τε τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ οἷς, καθάπερ εἴρηται πρότερον ἐν τοῖς ἠθικοῖς.

So too in *Politics* III. xii. 1, δοκεῖ δὲ πᾶσιν ἴσον τι τὸ δίκαιον εἶναι καὶ μέχρι γέ τινος ὁμολογοῦσι τοῖς κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν λόγοις ἐν οἷς διώρισται περὶ τῶν ἠθικῶν· τί γὰρ καὶ τισὶ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ δεῖν τοῖς ἴσοις ἴσον εἶναι φασιν.

We see about the last of these passages that it is no quo-



tation at all, but merely an assertion that, with regard to justice, people in general agree to a certain extent with the philosophic theory of ethics, &c. In the second passage, there are all the marks of an interpolated reference. In the first passage, the reference is general, being to doctrine not to words. We possess no doubt the ethical doctrine of Aristotle, as far as he had completed it, but do we possess it altogether in his own words?

(3) As to the style, we must bear in mind the very close resemblance of the style of the *Eudemian Ethics* to that of Aristotle. Perhaps nothing in the present books might have struck us as remarkable, but for the fact that they already stand as part of the *Eudemian Ethics*. And this leads us to institute a closer scrutiny. And out of this scrutiny there becomes apparent something confused, and what we might call Eudemian, about the writing, and something about the philosophy, on the one hand later and more mature, on the other hand slurred and indistinct. To feel the subtle importance of the argument from style, it is necessary to be familiar with the *Eudemian Ethics*. Those who are so, may notice the peculiarity of manner in the following places:

(a) In the collision between the end of Book IV. and the beginning of Book V., νῦν δὲ περὶ δικαιοσύνης εἰπόμεν. περὶ δὲ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἀδικίας σκεπτέον, and so also between the end of Book VII. and the beginning of Book VIII. These places seem to mark the bounds of an episode written separately, and awkwardly introduced. A similar collision between Books IX. and X. shows that the treatises on Friendship and Pleasure were written separately, though there is no reason to suspect the genuineness of either.

(β) In the inversion of sentence v. i. 8, δοκεῖ δὲ ὁ τε παράνομος ἄδικος εἶναι καὶ ὁ πλεονέκτης—ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ πλεονέκτης ὁ ἄδικος.

(γ) In the indistinctness, v. ii. 9, ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ ἄνισον καὶ τὸ πλεόν οὐ ταυτόν κ.τ.λ. This Dr. Cardwell remedies by a change of the reading, but against the authority of the MSS.

(δ) In the obscurity, v. viii. 10, ὁ δ' ἐπιβουλεύσας οὐκ ἄγνοεῖ, ὥστε ὁ μὲν οἶεται ἀδικεῖσθαι, ὁ δ' οὐ. The part of the subject in which the sentence occurs is promised, *Eth. Eud.* II. x. 19, καλῶς διορίζονται οἱ τῶν παθημάτων τὰ μὲν ἐκούσια, τὰ δ' ἀκούσια, τὰ δ' ἐκ προνοίας νομοθετοῦσιν. Ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τούτων ἐροῦμεν ἐν τῇ περὶ τῶν δικαίων ἐπισκέψει.

(ε) In the confusion, vi. xiii. 1, Σκεπτέον δὴ πάλιν καὶ περὶ ἀρετῆς· καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἀρετὴ παραπλησίως ἔχει ὥς ἡ φρόνησις πρὸς τὴν δεινότητα· οὐ ταυτόν μὲν, ὅμοιον δέ· οὕτω καὶ ἡ φυσικὴ ἀρετὴ πρὸς τὴν κυρίαν.

(ζ) In the excessive darkness, vii. vii. 2, ὁ μὲν τὰς ὑπερβολὰς διώκων τῶν ἡδέων ἢ καθ' ὑπερβολὰς ἢ διὰ προαίρεσιν.

These are but specimens of a kind of writing constantly prevalent in the *Eudemian Ethics*, which is different from the obscurity of Aristotle. Another peculiarity which might be noticed here, is the frequency of quotations and of logical formulæ. This we have before said is characteristic of Eudemus.

As to the philosophy of these books, it is to be noticed that they contain the doctrine of the practical syllogism, which has evidently been entirely worked out since the writing of Book III., or else why was it not there applied to the explanation of the will? There is also something very mature in the formula given in Book VI. for the definition of virtue. Σωκράτης μὲν οὖν λόγους τὰς ἀρετὰς ᾤετο εἶναι (ἐπιστήμας γὰρ εἶναι πάσας), ἡμεῖς δὲ μετὰ λόγον. Again in the use of the terms *δρος* and *σκοπός*, we observe something which has no parallel in other books of Aristotle, and which is apparently an innovation introduced into the system by Eudemus. Compare *Eth. Nic.* vi. i. 1, ἐν πάσαις γὰρ ταῖς εἰμημέναις ἔξισι,

καθάπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων, ἐστὶ τις σκοπὸς πρὸς δὲ ἀποβλέπων ὁ τὸν λόγον ἔχων ἐπιτείνει καὶ ἀνίσιν—and vi. i. 3, ἀλλὰ καὶ διωρισμένον (δεῖ εἶναι) τίς τ' ἐστὶν ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος καὶ τούτου τίς ὁρος—with *Eth. Eud.* II. v. 8, τίς δ' ὀρθὸς λόγος καὶ πρὸς τίνα δεῖ ὄρον ἀποβλέποντας λέγειν τὸ μέσον ὕστερον ἐπισκεπτέον. As we have seen, Eudemus makes the great ὁρος to consist in the contemplation and service of God. *Eth. Eud.* VIII. iii. 16, τίς μὲν οὖν ὁρος τῆς καλοκαγαθίας, καὶ τίς ὁ σκοπὸς τῶν ἀπλῶς ἀγαθῶν, ἔστω εἰρημένον. Surely this new formula is a confusion of Aristotle's ethical philosophy, for whereas before ὀρθὸς λόγος was made the standard of virtue, here a standard of that standard is introduced,—καὶ τούτου τίς ὁρος. Again, does not the mention of σκοπὸς in this formal way (not merely in a metaphorical sense, as in *Eth. Nic.* I. ii. 2) clash, as it were, with Aristotle's doctrine of τέλος?

Another piece of Eudemian philosophy shows itself in the theory that virtue gives us the end, and wisdom the means (or as they are here called, τὸν σκοπὸν and τὰ πρὸς τοῦτον), see *Eth. Nic.* VI. xii. 6, VI. xii. 10, VII. viii. 4. Whatever be the value of this doctrine in itself, it does not harmonize with the theory of moral faculties given in *Eth. Nic.* Book III.; but it coincides perfectly with the *Eudemian Ethics*, where this very question is the subject of a chapter (*Eth. Eud.* II. 10). Πότερον ἡ ἀρετὴ ποιεῖ τὸν σκοπὸν ἢ τὰ πρὸς τὸν σκοπόν; With regard to the treatise on Pleasure in *Eth. Nic.* Book VII., we may notice that it opens with a reference back which is rather more applicable to the Eudemians than to the Nicomacheans. Τὴν τε γὰρ ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν κακίαν τὴν ἠθικὴν περὶ λύπας καὶ ἡδονὰς ἔθεμεν. This might indeed allude to *Eth. Nic.* II. iii. 10, ὥστε καὶ διὰ τοῦτο περὶ ἡδονὰς καὶ λύπας πᾶσα ἡ πραγματεία καὶ τῇ ἀρετῇ καὶ τῇ πολιτικῇ. But the identification of virtue and vice with pleasure and pain is more definitely expressed in *Eth. Eud.* II. i. 24, II. ii. 1, II. v. 8. And it is

more after Aristotle's manner to begin a treatise *without* such a reference, as we find him doing *Eth. Nic.* x. i. 1. The distinctive characteristic of the treatise in Book VII., as compared with the latter, seems to be that it is less of a scientific account, and exhibits a more practical tendency. On the one hand, the formula for expressing pleasure is less exact, and the relation of pleasure to the chief good is less clearly enunciated. On the other hand, there seems to be some reference to the theory of incontinence. While it is acknowledged that all pleasure is not bodily pleasure, bodily pleasure is in reality almost exclusively discussed; and it is pointed out, how by necessities of nature and temperament men are led to run into bodily pleasures. Καὶ διὰ ταῦτα ἀκόλαστοι καὶ φαῦλοι γίγνονται. Not only is this practical and moral feeling characteristic of Eudemus, but also the materialistic tendency shown in these chapters, and indeed throughout Book VII., was a tendency into which the Peripatetic scholars seem to have fallen, and which runs out into extremity in many of the 'Problems' falsely attributed to Aristotle.

When we ask fairly, Do these three books complete the system of Aristotle's *Ethics*, on the supposition that they are genuinely his? the answer must be, that they cannot be said to do so. What we most essentially want after the conclusion of Book IV. is a theory of the Λόγος or moral standard. But can Book VI. be said to supply this? In the first place, we have already noticed the awkwardness of the phrase made use of by Eudemus, αἱ διανοητικαὶ ἀρεταὶ μετὰ λόγου. This same confusion of phrase is carried all through Book VI. of *Eth. Nic.* Φρόνησις equally with ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη is described as a ἕξις μετὰ λόγου. We might perhaps have imagined that this λόγος was some deeper law of the consciousness, lying behind φρόνησις and regulating it. But the reverse statement occurs at the end of Book VI., where φρόνησις is made

to regulate the λόγος (πάντες δταν ὀρίζονται τὴν ἀρετὴν προστιθέασι τὴν ἔξιν,—τὴν κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον, ὀρθὸς δ' ἔστι κατὰ τὴν φρόνησιν). Thus there is a carelessness of formula, which impairs the value of this part of the theory. Suppose we accept φρόνησις as Aristotle's term for the moral standard, we must in the first place miss any explanation of its connection with the mean; secondly, we do not find it harmonized with βούλησις, βούλευσις, and προαίρεσις, as they are described in Book III. Again we find it variously and incongruously set forth; 1st, as prudence, though its relation to happiness is not drawn out (vi. v. 3); 2nd, as including all human interests in its scope (vi. vii. 6); 3rd, as universal (vi. vii. 7); 4th, as particular (*ib.*); 5th, as intuitive (vi. viii. 9); 6th, as acquired by experience (vi. viii. 5); 7th, as a faculty of ends (vi. ix. 7); 8th, as a faculty of means (vi. xii. 9); 9th, as depending on the moral character (vi. xii. 10); 10th, as a sort of universal wisdom and perfected condition, both of the reason and the will, so that he who possessed it could do no wrong (vi. xiii. 6, vii. ii. 5). These contradictions and incongruities, when put together, allow us perhaps to form a general conception in which they may be all reconciled; but scattered about as they are in the sixth book of *Eth. Nic.* they present a very unphilosophical and unsatisfactory appearance, and make us doubt whether Aristotle himself can have been the author of this very imperfect *statement*. That he was the author in some sense of the *theory* we cannot doubt, and we know from *Metaphysics*, i. i. 17, that the psychology of the intellect,—the difference of ἐπιστήμη from σοφία, &c., formed part of Aristotle's ethical system, though we must also remark that σοφία is differently represented in the *Metaphysics* from what it is in *Eth. Nic.* Book VI., and we may well suspect that the theory of φρόνησις also is to some extent coloured by the views of Eudemus.

The same criticism applied to Book V. discloses also its imperfections, when considered as a supplement to the lucid account of the virtues in Books II.—IV. It gives a very indistinct answer to the question, 'In what sense are the two kinds of justice mean states?' which was proposed for discussion, *Eth. Nic.* II. vii. 16. In Book V. Aristotle's theory of justice looms upon us vaguely through a cloud. We know that he differed from Plato in his conception of justice, that he attributed to it a more special character, but how indistinct are the arguments (v. ii. 1—6) by which this special character is established. In Chapter 4th, διορθωτικὸν δίκαιον is spoken of as applicable both to voluntary and involuntary transactions, but of the former kind there is no explanation given. What is the relation of that justice in exchange, of which the principles are stated in Chapter 5th, to this 'corrective justice'? Granted that the two divisions of justice, viewed politically, into distributive and corrective, are of considerable importance (they were apparently known to Plato before Aristotle), yet these should not in a moral treatise absorb the whole account of the matter. The moral view of justice as an individual virtue or duty is here greatly deficient. Partly, we must conclude that the theory of Aristotle was immature, partly that it is ill-stated by Eudemus. In the last chapter of the book we find an irregularity which proves the influence of unskilful editorship. There is a repetition of a question already answered. In all probability the book was meant to end at the conclusion of Chapter 10. Those who start with the supposition that the *Nicomachean Ethics* are a finished treatise from which they have only to reject glaring irregularities, are in the habit of saying that Book V. is by Aristotle except the last chapter, which is by Eudemus. For this hypothesis there is not the slightest evidence, either internal or external.

Arguments might be multiplied to show that in all probability Books V. VI. VII. are the work of Eudemus, just in the same sense as the *Eudemian Ethics* are his work, namely, they are his exposition of the theory of Aristotle slightly modified by his own views. Whether, as in the case of the *Metaphysics* (above mentioned p. 19), parts of Aristotle's own ethical writing which corresponded to these books have been lost, and the lacuna supplied from the exposition of Eudemus, or whether never anything but an oral theory of this part of the system existed, it seems impossible to say. Aristotle's reference to the theory (*Metaphys.* I. i. 17), makes it more probable that something was written, but we must not hence conclude that the *Ethics* was ever a finished work, or published in the lifetime of Aristotle. His quotations in the *Metaphysics* and *Politics* do not by any means prove this. Aristotle was probably carrying on his various works together, and thus might naturally refer from one which was in conception later, to one which was in conception more complete, though not yet given to the world.

We see then the condition and the character of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. A comparison of their beginning and end seems to show that the work is constructed on a scientific frame. There can be no doubt that these first and last books were written by Aristotle himself. He probably drew out at the same time the entire plan for the intermediate books. The separate part of his subject, divided according to this plan, he must have worked out according to his custom at different times. These parts therefore have different degrees of connexion with the whole, different degrees of completeness in themselves. Thus the treatises on the Voluntary, on Pleasure, and on Friendship, have all an introduction, showing that they are meant to form part of an ethical system. But the treatise on Friendship in three places uses the phrase *καθάρπε*

ἐν ἀρχῇ εἰρηται (VIII. ix. 1, VIII. xiii. 1, IX. iii. 1), to denote its own earlier chapters, as if being an independent work. It also uses the same phrase (IX. ix. 5,) to denote the beginning of the entire *Ethics*. Thus Books VIII. and IX. have a double nature; on the one hand they are a separate treatise, on the other hand part of a larger work. We must conceive then these 'disiecta membra' of Aristotle's *Ethics* lying among his papers at his death. It is quite possible that some time may have elapsed before Nicomachus, or whoever was the first editor, took in hand their amalgamation. In the meanwhile Eudemus may have been writing his system, though it is uncertain whether this was ever completed. Part of the original system of Aristotle, being now lost or for some cause or other wanting, Nicomachus probably took three of the Eudemian books as being the nearest approach to the doctrine and to the very words of Aristotle, and grafted them on with the view of presenting a completed treatise to the world. This procedure has had the disadvantage of introducing several collisions and awkward incongruities between different parts of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. But it has enabled us to form a conception in outline of what Aristotle's moral system was meant to be, or at all events what it was conceived to be by the Peripatetic school. We must acknowledge at the same time that on some parts of this system we are not fully informed, that on some of the most important questions we are only able to conjecture vaguely what was the opinion of Aristotle.



## ESSAY II.

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### *On the History of Moral Philosophy in Greece previous to Aristotle.*

IN the *Ethics* of Aristotle there are but few direct allusions to moral theories of other philosophers. Plato's theory of the idea of good, viewed in its relation to *Ethics* (I. 6); Socrates' definition of courage (III. viii. 6); of virtue (VI. xiii. 3); his opinion of incontinence (VII. ii. 1); Eudoxus' theory of pleasure (X. ii. 1); the Pythagorean definition of justice (V. v. 1); and Solon's paradox (I. 10), are perhaps the only ones which are by name commented on. There are constant impersonal allusions to various opinions (the λεγόμενα on the subject in hand); some of these Aristotle attributes to 'the few,' that is, the philosophers, others he speaks of as stamped with the consent of 'the many and of ancient times.' (I. viii. 7.) But there is no connected history of ethical opinions or ethical systems to be found in this work of Aristotle. His *Metaphysics*, his *Physical Lectures*, and his *De Animâ*, each commence with a historical introduction, so that the various problems to be answered in these several sciences are made to develop themselves out of the attempts and the failures of previous enquiries. But we miss here any such opening, and the reason is that *Ethics* were only first beginning to have an existence as a separate science,—with Aristotle. Before the fifth century, philosophy had been entirely physical or metaphysical; with the Sophists and Socrates thought was directed to the *rationale* of human life, to discussions of virtue and justice and the duties of a citizen. But before Plato there

were no scientific treatises on moral subjects, and even in Plato there was no separation between Morals and Politics. Aristotle beginning his treatise in a tentative way, and partly following the lead of Plato, speaks of his science as 'a sort of Politics' (I. iii. 1); at the same time he gives it a treatment which effectually separates it from Politics. By reason then of this tentative attitude and this silence of Aristotle, we are left to discuss for ourselves the beginnings of moral philosophy in Greece; which it is indeed necessary to do, since a system of any kind can only be properly understood by knowing its antecedents.

The author of the *Magna Moralia* prefixes to his book the following brief sketch of the previous progress of the science. 'The first to attempt this subject was Pythagoras. His method was faulty, for he made virtue a number, justice a cube, &c. To him succeeded Socrates, who effected a great advance, but who erred in calling virtue a science, and in thus ignoring the distinction between the moral nature ( $\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\omicron\varsigma$  καὶ  $\eta\theta\omicron\varsigma$ ) and the intellect. Afterwards came Plato, who made the right psychological distinctions, but who mixed up and confused ethical discussions with ontological enquiries as to the nature of the chief good.' In a shadowy way this passage represents the truth; for it is true that in the pre-Socratic philosophy, of which the Pythagorean system may stand as a type, ethical ideas had no distinctness, they were confused with physical or mathematical notions. Also the faults in the Ethics of Socrates and Plato are here rightly stated. But it is a confusion to speak of Pythagoras as a moral philosopher, in the same sense that Socrates and Plato were so, or to speak of Socrates succeeding Pythagoras in the same way that Plato succeeded Socrates. Even were the account more accurate, that it is too barren to be in itself very useful, every one will acknowledge.

Renouncing any attempt to trace a succession of systems (which indeed did not exist), until we come to the limited period of development between Socrates and Aristotle, let us take a broader view of the subject and divide morality into three eras, first the era of popular or unconscious morals; second, the transitional, sceptical, or sophistic era; thirdly, the philosophic or conscious era. These different stages appear to succeed each other in the national and equally in the individual mind. The simplicity and trust of childhood, the unsettled and undirected force of youth, and the wisdom of matured life. First, we believe because others do so; then, in order to obtain personal convictions we pass through a stage of doubt; then we believe the more deeply and in a somewhat different way from what we did at the outset. On these three distinct periods or aspects of thought about moral subjects, much might be said. The first thing to remark is, that they are not only successive to each other if you regard the mind of the most cultivated and advanced thinkers of successive epochs, but also they are contemporaneous and in juxtaposition to each other, if you regard the different degrees of cultivation and advancement among persons of the same epoch. In Plato's *Republic* we find the three points of view represented by different persons in the dialogue. The question, What is justice? being started, an answer to it is first given from the point of view of popular morality in the persons of Cephalus and of his son Polemarchus, who define it to be, in the words of Simonides, 'paying to every one what you owe them.' To this definition captious difficulties are started,—difficulties which the popular morality, owing to its unphilosophical tenure of all conceptions, is quite unable to meet. Then comes an answer from the Sophistical point of view, in the person of Thrasymachus, that 'justice is the advantage of the stronger.' This having been overthrown, partly by an

able sophistical skirmish, partly by the assertion of a deeper moral conviction,—the field is left open for a philosophical answer to the question. And this accordingly occupies the remainder of Plato's *Republic*, the different sides of the answer being represented by different personages; Glaucon and Adeimantus personifying the practical understanding which is only gradually brought into harmony with philosophy, Socrates the higher reason and the most purely philosophical conception. Almost all the dialogues of Plato, which touch on moral questions, may be said to illustrate the collision between the above-mentioned different periods or points of view, though none so fully as the *Republic*. Some dialogues, which are merely tentative, as the *Euthyphro*, *Lysis*, *Charmides*, *Laches*, &c., content themselves with showing the unsatisfactoriness of the popular conceptions; common definitions are overthrown; the difficulty of the subject is exposed; a deeper method is suggested; but the question is left at last without an answer. In others, as in the *Hippias Major*, *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, and *Euthydemus* various aspects of the Sophistical point of view are exposed; (on which we shall find much material for discussion hereafter); in all the dialogues a glimpse, at all events, of true philosophy is suggested, in a few only, as in the *Philebus*, is there anything like a proportion of constructive to the destructive dialectic.

Plato's wonderful dramatic pictures hold up a mirror to the different phases of error and truth in the human mind, so that we turn to his dialogues as to real life. But all reasonings on morality must exhibit the distinction existing between the popular, the sophistic, and the philosophical points of view. This distinction will be found marked in the *Ethics* of Aristotle, only Aristotle is less hostile than Plato to the popular conceptions, and rather considers them as the exponents of a true instinct with which his own theories must

be brought into harmony. Also, being more concerned with the attainment and enunciation of truth than with recording its *genesis*, he does not dwell on the relation of the sophistical spirit to morality. He touches on certain sceptical and arbitrary opinions concerning morals which may be considered as the remnants of sophistry. But we must not reckon among these, philosophical opinions with which he disagrees, since philosophy may be mistaken and yet be philosophy, if its spirit be pure.

Without laying too much stress on our three divisions, we may at all events regard them as convenient chronological heads. And let us now proceed to make some remarks on the characteristics of the first period of Grecian Ethics.

I. It has been said that 'before Socrates there was no morality in Greece, but only propriety of conduct.' This sentence conveys the same meaning as the argument in Plato's *Phædo* (p. 68), that 'without philosophy there is no morality, for the popular courage is a sort of fear, and the popular temperance a sort of intemperance.' It rightly asserts that the highest kind of goodness is inseparable from wisdom, from a distinct consciousness of the meaning of acts—from a sense of the absoluteness of right in itself. 'Morality' according to this view only exists when the individual can say, 'I am a law to myself, the edicts of the state and of society are valid to me because they are *my* edicts—because they are pronounced by the voice of reason and of right that is in me.' It however puts perhaps too great a restriction upon the term 'morality,' as if nothing but the highest moral goodness were 'morality' at all. It seems absurd to characterize as mere 'propriety of conduct' the acts of generosity, patriotism, endurance, and devotion which were done, and the blameless lives that were led, long before there was any philosophy of right and wrong. Indeed there is something that

seems *more* attractive about instinctive acts of nobleness, than about a reasoned goodness. To some the innocent obedience of the child appears more lovely than the virtue of the man. Still instinct is inferior to reason, the child is less than the man; and if God makes us what we are in childhood, we must re-make ourselves in maturer age; and it is the law of our nature that what was at first only potential in us, and only dimly felt as an instinct, should become realized by us and present to our consciousness. The very word 'conscience,' on which right so much depends, is only another term to express 'consciousness,' and a man differs from a machine in this, that the one has a law in itself,—is moved, as Aristotle would say, *κατὰ λόγον*; the other is moved *μετὰ λόγον*, has the law both in and for himself.

Without entering into speculations on the origin of society, we may safely assert that, as far as historical evidence goes, the broad distinctions between crime and virtue seem always to have been marked. National temperament, organization, climate, and a certain latent national idea that has to be gradually developed—these go some way to mould the general human instincts of right and wrong, and these produce whatever is special in the national life and customs and code of laws (for occasion calls forth legislation, and so a code of laws grows up); and thus men live and do well or ill, and obtain praise or blame, are punished and rewarded. But as yet there is no *rationale* of all this. It is an age of action rather than of reflection—of poetry rather than analysis. To this succeeds a time when the first generalizations about life, in the shape of proverbs and maxims, begin to spring up. These are wise, but they do not constitute philosophy. They seldom rise above the level of prudential considerations, or empirical remarks on life, but they serve the requirements of those for whom they are made. Later, however, poetry and proverbs

cease to satisfy the minds of thinkers; the thoroughly-awakened intellect now calls in question the old saws and maxims, the authority of the poets, and even the validity of the institutions of society itself. After this has come to pass, the age of unconscious morality, for cultivated men at least, has ceased for ever. In the quickly ripening mind of Greece, the different stages of the progress we have described succeed each other in distinct and rapid succession. In Christendom, from a variety of causes, it was impossible that the phenomenon should be re-enacted with the same simplicity.

The popular morality which is represented in the dialogues of Plato, may serve to embody the results which were arrived at in Greece without scepticism and without philosophy. The following are its chief characteristics. (1) It is based upon texts and maxims, and these maxims are for the most part merely prudential. (2) It is apt to connect itself with a superstitious and unworthy idea of religion, such as was set forth in the mysteries, and which constituted the trade of juggling hierophants. With regard to the former point, nothing is more marked than the unbounded reverence of the Greeks for the old national literature. Homer, Hesiod, and the Gnostic poets constituted the educational course. Add to these the saws of the Seven Wise Men and a set of aphorisms of the same calibre, which sprung up in the sixth century, and we have before us the main sources of Greek views of life. It was perhaps in the age of the Pisistratidæ that the formation and promulgation of this system of texts took place most actively. In the little dialogue called *Hipparchus*, attributed to Plato, but of uncertain authorship, we find an episode (from which the dialogue is named) relating a fact, if not literally, at all events symbolically true. It relates that Hipparchus, the wisest of the sons of Pisistratus, wishing to educate the citizens, introduced the poems of Homer, and made Rhapsodes

recite them at the Panathenæa. Also, that he kept Simonides near him, and sent to fetch Anacreon of Teos. Also, that he set up obelisks along the streets and the roads, carved with sentences of wisdom, selected from various sources, or invented by himself, some of which even rivalled the 'Know thyself,' and other famous inscriptions at Delphi.

It is obvious how much the various influences here specified worked on the Athenian mind. The mouths of the people were full of these maxims, and when Socrates asked for the definition of any moral term, he was answered by a quotation from Simonides, Hesiod, or Homer. The same tendency was not confined to Athens, but was doubtless, with modifications, prevalent throughout Greece. With regard to the worth of the authorities above-specified, a few words may be said, taking each separately. The morality in Homer is what you would expect. It is concrete, not abstract; it expresses the conception of a heroic life rather than a philosophical theory. It is mixed up with a religion which really consists in a celebration of the beauty of the world, and in a deification of the strong, bright, and brilliant qualities of human nature. It is a morality uninfluenced by a regard to a future life. It clings with intense enjoyment and love to the present world, and the state after death looms in the distance as a cold and repugnant shadow. And yet it would often hold death preferable to disgrace. The distinction between a noble and an ignoble nature is strongly marked in Homer, and yet the sense of right and wrong about particular actions seems very fluctuating. A sensuous conception of happiness and the chief good is often apparent, and there is great indistinctness about all psychological terms and conceptions. Life and mind, breath and soul, thought and sensation, seem blended or confused together. Plato's opinion of Homer was a reaction against the popular enthusiasm, and we must take Plato's



expressions not as an absolute verdict, but as relative to the unthinking reverence of his countrymen. He speaks as if irritated at the wide influence exercised by a book in which there was so little philosophy.

If we consider Homer in his true light, as the product and exponent, rather than as the producer of the national modes of thought, Plato's criticisms will then appear merely as directed against the earliest and most instinctive conceptions of morality, as a protest against perpetuating these and treating them as if they were adequate for a more advanced age. Socrates says (*Repub.* p. 606), 'You will find the praisers of Homer maintaining that this poet has educated all Greece, and that with a view to the direction and cultivation of human nature he is worthy to be taken up and learnt by heart; that in short one should frame one's whole life according to this poet. To these gentlemen,' continues Socrates, 'you should pay all respect, and concede to them that Homer was a great poet and first of the tragic writers (ποιητικώτατον εἶναι καὶ πρῶτον τῶν τραγωδοποιῶν); but you should hold to the conviction that poetry is only to be admitted into a state in the shape of hymns to the Gods and encomia on the good.' The point of view from which this is said is evidently that in comparison with the vast importance of a philosophic morality, everything else is to be considered of little value and to be set aside. The faults that Plato finds with Homer in detail are, that he recommends justice by the inducements of temporal rewards (*Repub.* pp. 363, 612), thus turning morality into prudence; that he makes God the source of evil as well as of good (*Repub.* p. 379); that he makes God changeable (p. 381); that he represents the gods as capable of being bribed with offerings (p. 364); that he gives a gloomy picture of the soul after death, describing the future world in a way which is calculated to depress the mind and fill it with unmanly fore-

bodings (p. 387); that he represents his heroes as yielding to excessive and ungoverned emotion, and that even his gods give way to immoderate laughter (pp. 388-9); and that instances of intemperance, both in language, and in the indulgence of the appetites, often form a part of his narrative (p. 390). In the *Ethics* of Aristotle the poems of Homer are frequently referred to for the sake of illustration as being a perfectly well known literature. Thus the warning of Calypso—or, as it should have been, Circe, (*Eth.* II. ix. 2); the dangerous charms of Helen (II. ix. 6); and the procedure of the Homeric Kings (III. iii. 18); are used as figures to illustrate moral or psychological truths. Again, instances of any particular phenomenon are hence cited; as for example, Diomedes and Hector are cited as an instance of political courage (III. viii. 2), and Glaucus and Diomedes of an unequal bargain where no wrong is done (v. ix. 7). In other places Aristotle appeals to the words of Homer, in the same way that he does to the popular language, namely, as containing a latent philosophy in itself, and as bearing witness to the conclusions of philosophy. Thus Homer's use of the word *σοφός* (VI. vii. 2); his calling Agamemnon 'shepherd of the people' (VIII. xi. 1); his mention of the superhuman qualities of Hector (VII. i. 1); his description of the girdle of Venus (VII. vi. 3); and his physical descriptions of courage (III. viii. 10), are all appealed to as containing, or testifying to, a philosophical truth.

Turning from Homer to Hesiod, we discover at once a certain change or difference in spirit, and in the views that are taken of human life. In the *Works and Days* those that fought at Troy are represented as 'a race of demi-gods and beatified heroes,' dwelling in the 'happy isles' free from care or sorrow; whereas with Homer, these personages are merely illustrious mortals, subject to the same passions and sufferings as their descendants, and condemned at their death to the same dismal

after life of Hades, so gloomily depicted in the *Odyssey*.<sup>1</sup> Not only does this difference point to a development in the Grecian mythology, indicating the matured growth of the popular hero-worship; it also shows a feeling which characterizes other parts of Hesiod, a sense that a bright period is lost, and 'that there had passed away a glory from the earth.'

The poet is no longer carried out of himself in thinking of the deeds of Achilles and Hector. He laments that he has fallen on evil days, that he lives in the last and worst of the Five Ages of the World.<sup>2</sup> He finds 'all things full of labour.' He is conscious of a Fall of Man, and accounts for this by two inconsistent episodes, the one<sup>3</sup> representing mankind, through the fatal gift of Pandora, blighted at the very outset; the other<sup>4</sup> describing a gradual decadence from the primeval Golden Age. Once the gods dwelt upon earth, but now even Honour that does no wrong, and Retribution that suffers no wrong, (Αἰδῶς καὶ Νέμεσις), the last of the Immortals, have gone and left us.<sup>5</sup> Mixed up with this sad and gloomy view of the state of the world, we find indications of a religious belief which is in some respects more elevated than the theology of Homer. Hesiod represents the messengers of Zeus, 30,000 dæmons always pervading the earth, and watching on deeds of justice and injustice.<sup>6</sup> A belief in the moral government of God

<sup>1</sup> Mure's *Literature of Greece*, Vol. II. p. 402.

<sup>2</sup> V. 172 sqq.

μηκέτ' ἔπειτ' ὤφειλον ἐγὼ πέμπτοισι  
μετεῖναι  
ἀνδράσιν, ἀλλ' ἢ πρόσθε θανεῖν, ἢ  
ἔπειτα γενέσθαι  
νῦν γὰρ δὴ γένος ἐστί σιδήρεον· οὐδέ  
ποτ' ἦμαρ  
παύσονται καμάτου καὶ διζύου, οὐδέ τι  
νύκτωρ  
φθειρόμενοι· χαλεπὰς δὲ θεοὶ δώσουσι  
μερίμνας.

<sup>3</sup> Vv. 48-105.

<sup>4</sup> Vv. 108-171.

<sup>5</sup> Vv. 195-199.

<sup>6</sup> V. 250 sq.

τρεῖς γὰρ μύριοι εἰσὶν ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυ-  
βοτείρῃ  
ἀθάνατοι Ζητῆς, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώ-  
πων  
οἳ βα φυλασσουσὶν τε δίκας καὶ σχέτλια  
ἔργα  
ἡέρα ἐσσάμενοι, πάντῃ φοιτῶντες ἐπ'  
αἶαν.

is here indicated, though it is expressed in a polytheistic manner, and there is a want of confidence and trust in the divine benevolence. The gods are only just, and not benign. Hesiod's book of the *Works and Days* is apparently a cento, containing the elements of at least two separate poems, the one an address to the poet's brother Perses, with an appeal against his injustice; the other perhaps by a different hand, containing maxims of agriculture, and an account of the operations at different seasons. Into this part different sententious rules of conduct are interwoven, which may be rather national and Bœotian than belonging to any one particular author. The morality of Hesiod, whatever its origin, contains a fine practical view of life. It enjoins justice, energy, and above all, temperance and simplicity of living. Nothing can be finer than the saying<sup>7</sup> quoted by Plato (cf. *Repub.* p. 466, *Laws*, p. 690), 'How much is the half greater than the whole! how great a blessing is there in mallows and asphodelus!' Plato finds fault with Hesiod that his is a merely prudential Ethics, or eudæmonism, that he recommends justice by the promise of temporal advantage (*Repub.* p. 363). Many of his maxims are indeed not above the level of a yeoman's morality, consisting in advice about the treatment of neighbours, servants, &c. One of these Aristotle alludes to (*Eth.* ix. i. 6). It is the recommendation that, even between friends, wages should be stipulated and the bargain kept. Of a different stamp, however, is that passage of Hesiod, which has been so repeatedly quoted.<sup>8</sup> It contains the same figure to represent virtue and vice, which was afterwards consecrated in the mouth of Christ: 'The road to vice may easily be travelled

<sup>7</sup> V. 40 sq.  
νήπιον, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν ὅσῳ πλεον ἤμισυ  
παντός,  
οὐδ' ὅσον ἐν μαλάχῃ τε καὶ ἀσφοδέλῳ  
μεγ' ὄνειαρ.

<sup>8</sup> Xen. *Memorab.* ii. i. 20. Plato,  
*Repub.* p. 364. *Laws*, p. 718. *Protagoras*, p. 340, &c.

by crowds, for it is smooth, and she dwells close at hand. But the path of virtue is steep and difficult, and the gods have ordained that only by toil can she be reached.' And this truth is rendered still deeper by the addition, that 'He is best who acts on his own convictions, while he is second-best who acts in obedience to the counsel of others.' Aristotle cites this latter saying (*Eth.* I. iv. 7), which contains more than, in all probability, its author was conscious of. He also quotes from Hesiod another most acute remark,<sup>9</sup> which is to the effect that society is constructed upon a basis of competition,—that a principle of strife which makes 'potter foe to potter' (*Eth.* VIII. i. 6), produces all honourable enterprises. It may truly be said that if Hesiod was no moral philosopher, he was a very great moralist.

Passing on now to the 'Seven Wise Men,' the heroes of the sixth century B.C., who are separated from Hesiod by we cannot tell how wide a chronological interval, we do not find any great advance made beyond him in their moral point of view, but rather a following out of the same direction. We find still a prudential Ethics dealing in a disjointed, but often a forcible and pregnant manner, with the various parts of life. Of 'the Seven,' it was well said by Dicaearchus (ap. Diog. Laert. I. 40) that 'they were neither speculators nor philosophers (οὔτε σοφοὺς οὔτε φιλοσόφους, N.B. σοφοὺς is here used in a restricted and Aristotelian sense), but men of insight, with a turn for legislation (συνετοὺς δέ τινας καὶ νομοθετικούς).' They belonged to an era of political change, which was calculated to teach experience and to call forth worldly wisdom,

<sup>9</sup> V. 11 sqq.

οὐκ ἄρα μόνον ξην ἐρίδων γένος, ἀλλ'  
ἐπὶ γαίαν  
εἰσι δῶ. τὴν μὲν κεν ἐπαινῆσκει νοή-  
σας,

ἡ δ' ἐπιμωμητή, κ.τ.λ.

. . . ἀγαθὴ δ' ἔρις ἤδε βρο-  
τόισι  
καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεὶ κοτίζει, καὶ τέκτον  
τέκτων. ↓

the era of the overthrow of hereditary monarchs in Greece. All the sages were either tyrants, or legislators, or the advisers of those in power. The number seven is of later date, and probably a mere attempt at completeness. There is no agreement as to the list, but the names most generally specified are Thales, Solon, Periander, Cleobulus, Chilon, Bias, Pittacus. Of these Thales ought to be exempted from the criticism of Diæarchus, for though many adages are attributed to him, he was no mere politician, but a deep thinker, and the first speculative philosopher of Greece. All that was most distinctive in Thales does not belong to the level of thought which we are now considering. Of the rest it was said by Anaximenes (ap. Diog. Laert. *l.c.*), that they 'all tried their hand at poetry.' This is characteristic of a period antecedent to the formation of anything like a prose style. Of the poems of Solon, considerable passages are preserved to us; they consist of elegies, in which the political circumstances of Solon's lifetime are recorded, and into which sufficient general reflections on human nature are interwoven to entitle him to be called a Gnostic poet. Solon's views of life, as far as they appear in his poetry, are characterized by a manliness which contrasts them with the soft Lydian effeminacy of Mimnermus, to one of whose sentiments Solon made answer. Mimnermus having expressed a wish for a painless life and a death at the age of 80, Solon answers: 'Bear me no ill will for having thought on this subject better than you—alter the words and sing, May the fate of death reach me in my *sixtieth* year.' In one passage of his works Solon divides human life into periods of seven years, and assigns to each its proper physical and mental occupations (*Frag.* 14); in another the multifarious pursuits of men are described, and their inability to command success, because fate brings good and ill to mortals,

and man cannot escape from the destiny allotted to him by the gods (*Fr.* 5). Let us now compare these two last sentiments with that saying which is always connected with the name of Solon, and which was thought worthy of a careful examination by Aristotle (*Eth.* i. 10—11), the saying, that 'One must look to the end,' or that 'No one man be called happy while he lives.' The story of Solon's conversation with Cræsus, as given by Herodotus, is in all probability totally without historical foundation. It has the aspect of a rhetorical *ἐπιδείξις* dressed up by some Sophist to illustrate the *gnome* of Solon. However, the beauty of the story as related by Herodotus, no one can deny. The *gnome* itself in its present form has this merit, that it is perhaps the first attempt to regard life as a whole. It denies the name of happiness to the pleasure or prosperity of a moment. But its fault is, as Aristotle points out, that it makes happiness purely to consist in external fortune, it implies too little faith in, and too little regard for, the internal consciousness, which after all is far the most essential element of happiness. Moreover, there is a sort of superstition manifested in this view, and in the above-quoted verses of Solon. It represents the Deity as 'envious' of human happiness. This view is elsewhere reprobated by Aristotle (*Metaphys.* i. ii. 13); it was a view, perhaps, natural in a period of political change and personal vicissitude, previous to the development of any philosophy which could read the permanent behind the changeable.

The remainder of the 'Seven' hardly need a mention in detail. The sayings attributed to them are too little connected to merit a criticism from a scientific point of view. 'The uncertainty of human things, the brevity of life, the unhappiness of the poor, the blessing of friendship, the sanctity of an oath, the force of necessity, the power of time, such are the

most ordinary subjects of their gnomes, when they do not reduce themselves to the simple rules of prudence.<sup>10</sup> However, some of the utterances of this era of proverbial philosophy stand conspicuous among the rest, containing a depth of meaning of which their authors could have been only half conscious. This meaning was drawn out and developed by later philosophers. The *Μηδὲν ἄγαν* of Solon, and the *Μέτρον ἄριστον* of Cleobulus, passed almost into something new in the *μετριότης* of Plato, and the *Γνώθι σεαυτὸν* (of uncertain authorship) which was inscribed on the front of the temple at Delphi, became in the hands of Socrates in a measure the foundation of philosophy. In the *Ethics* of Aristotle, proverbs of this epoch are occasionally quoted, though not always connected with the name of any individual sage. Thus the saying, that 'Office shows the man' (*Eth.* v. i. 16), is attributed to Bias; but the adage *πολλὰς δὴ φιλίας ἀπροσηγορία διέλυσε* (VIII. v. 1), and other proverbial verses, such as *ἰσθλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἀπλῶς κ.τ.λ.* (II. vi. 14), and *κάλλιστον τὸ δικαιοτάτον κ.τ.λ.* (I. viii. 14), which belong to the gnostic period, are cited without a name.

Two more poets may be mentioned who will serve to complete our specimens of the sixth century thought on moral subjects. These are Theognis and Simonides. They both were great authorities, as is evinced by their being so frequently cited in the writings of the ancients. They both have this in common that their verse betrays a constant reflectiveness on human life. But the tone is to some extent different. Theognis draws a darker picture than Simonides. Theognis exhibits traces of a harassed and unfortunate life, and the pressure of circumstances. Simonides, who lived through the Persian wars, writes in a more manly strain, as if inspired by the times

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<sup>10</sup> Renouvier, *Manuel de Phil. Anc.* I. p. 127.



and the glorious deeds of his countrymen, which he celebrated in his poetry. Theognis appears to have lived during the latter half of the sixth century. His writings are chiefly autobiographical, and consist of reflections caused by the political events of his life and of his native city Megara. He seems to have belonged to the aristocratic party and to have suffered exile, losing all his property and barely escaping with his life. His feelings of indignation are constantly expressed in his poems—in which perhaps the greatest peculiarity is, that in them the terms ἀγαθοὶ and ἰσθλοὶ are used to designate his own party, the nobles, while the commons are called κακοὶ and δειλοί. It must not be supposed that these terms had hitherto no ethical meaning, though of course scientific ethical definitions had as yet never been attempted. But the words ἰσθλὸς and κακὸς occur in Hesiod in quite as distinctive a sense, as the terms 'good man,' and 'bad man,' are used in general now. It is the extreme of political partizanship expressing itself in a naïve and unconscious manner which causes Theognis to identify goodness with the aristocratic classes, and badness with the commonalty of his city. We can find a strange intermixture and confusion in his writings of political and ethical thoughts. In the celebrated passage which dwells on the influence of associates, he begins by saying 'You should eat and drink with those who have great power' (i.e. the nobles,) 'for from the good you will learn what is good, but by mixing with the bad you will lose what reason you have.' Here an undeniable moral axiom is made to assume a political aspect, which indeed impairs its force. Plato, in the *Meno*,<sup>11</sup> quotes this passage and shows that it is contradicted by another passage of Theognis, which declares

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<sup>11</sup> Οἶσθα δὲ ὅτι οὐ μόνον σοὶ τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς πολιτικοῖς τοῦτο δοκεῖ | τοτὲ μὲν εἶναι διδακτόν, τοτὲ δ' οὐ, ἀλλὰ καὶ Θεόγνων τὸν ποιητὴν οἶσθ' ὅτι

education to be of no effect. Theognis appears to have felt at different times with equal force the two points of view about education. At one time education appears to be everything, at another time, nothing.

All the expressions of Theognis, as indeed of the other Gnostic poets, seem characterized by perfect naturalness, if such a word might be used. They contain no attempt to reduce life to a theory; they flow from the heart of the individual according as he feels joy or sorrow. They exhibit no striving to be above circumstances,—rather the full, unrestrained wail of one who bitterly feels the might of circumstances. They do not seek to be logical, on the contrary, they are full of inconsistencies. In one place Theognis says (173—182), 'If one is poor it is better to die than live; one should cast oneself from some high cliff into the sea.' In another place (315—318), 'Many of the bad are rich, and the good poor, yet one would not exchange one's virtue for riches.' In the views of Theognis, as we saw before in those of Solon, there may be traced a superstitious feeling of the resistless power, and at the same time the arbitrary will of the gods. As to the standard of duty in his poems, such a conception

ταῦτά ταῦτα λέγει; Μ. 'Ἐν ποίοις ἐπε-  
σω; Σ. 'Ἐν τοῖς ἐλεγείοις, οὐ λέγει

καὶ παρὰ τοῖσιν πῦρε καὶ ἔσθιε καὶ μετὰ  
τοῖσιν

ἴξε καὶ ἀνδανὲ τοῖς ὦν μεγάλη δύνα-  
μις.

ἐσθλῶν μὲν γὰρ ἄπ' ἐσθλὰ διδάξαι, ἣν  
δὲ κακοῖσιν

συμμισηγῆς ἀπολείς καὶ τὸν ἐόντα  
νόον.

οἶσθ' ὅτι ἐν τοῖτοισ μὲν ὡς διδακτοῦ  
οὐσης τῆς ἀρετῆς λέγει; Μ. Φαίνεται  
γε. Σ. 'Ἐν ἄλλοις δέ γε ὀλίγον μετα-  
βάς, εἰ δ' ἦν ποιητὴν, φησί, καὶ ἐνθετον  
ἀνδρὶ νόημα λέγει πως ὅτι

πολλοὺς ἂν μισθοὺς καὶ μεγάλους  
ἐφερω

οἱ δυνάμενοι τοῦτο ποιεῖν καὶ

οὐ ποτ' ἂν ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ πατρὸς ἔγεντο  
κακός,

πειθόμενος μύθοις σαφέροσιν, ἀλλὰ δι-  
δάσκων

οὐ ποτε ποιήσεις τὸν κακὸν ἄνδρ'  
ἀγαθόν.

ἐννοεῖς ὅτι αὐτὸς αὐτῷ πάλιν περὶ τῶν  
αὐτῶν τάναντία λέγει;

Both of these passages of Theognis  
are alluded to by Aristotle in the  
*Ethics* (ix. ix. 7, x. ix. 3).

must needs be held to have been very wavering in him who could write (363 sq.), 'Flatter your enemy, and when you have got him into your power, wreak your vengeance, and do not spare him.' It is obvious that the elegiac form adopted by Theognis gave an air of universality to maxims which were only suitable to his own troubled times, and his own angry spirit. To accept the cynicism and the complaints of Byron as if of universal applicability, would be almost a parallel to what actually took place in Greece, when the verses of Theognis were quoted as an authority in morals. That this could ever have been the case, shows how great was the want of a more fixed standard, and almost justifies the sweeping attacks made by Plato upon the poets.

In the verses of Simonides of Ceos there is, as we have said, a more healthy spirit. His life (B.C. 556—467) was prosperous, and was spent at different courts, especially those of Hipparchus at Athens, of the Aenads and Scopads in Thessaly, of Hiero at Syracuse. If Theognis be compared to Byron among the moderns, Simonides may, in some respects, be compared to Goethe, though Goethe exhibits no parallel to his spirited and even impassioned songs on the heroic incidents of the war. But the courtly demeanour of Simonides, to which he seems to have somewhat sacrificed his independence, his worldly wisdom, his moderation of views, his realistic tendencies with regard to life, and his efforts for a calm and unruffled enjoyment, remind one a little of the great German. Beyond heroism in war, Simonides does not appear to have held any exalted notions of the possibilities of virtue. There is a very interesting discussion in the *Protagoras* of Plato (pp. 339—346), on the meaning of some strophes in one of the Epinician odes of Simonides. This discussion has the effect of exhibiting the critical ability of Socrates as superior to that of Protagoras. The import of the passage criticized appears

to be, that, 'while absolute perfection (*τετράγωνον ἀνευ ψόγου γενέσθαι*) is well-nigh impossible, yet Simonides will not accept the saying of Pittacus, 'it is hard to be good,'—for misfortune makes a man bad and prosperity good; good is mixed with evil, and Simonides will be satisfied if a man be not utterly evil and useless;—he will give up vain and impracticable hopes, and praise and love all who do not voluntarily commit base actions.' These expressions are very characteristic of Simonides. We may remark in them (1) the criticism upon Pittacus, which shows the advance of reflective morality; (2) the point of view taken, namely, a sort of worldly moderation. Simonides complains that Pittacus has set up too high an ideal of virtue, and then proclaimed the difficulty of attaining it. Simonides proposes to substitute a more practical standard.

In thus discussing one of the gnomes of the Seven sages, Simonides approaches in some degree to the mode of thought of the Sophists, but in later times he was taken as the representative of the old school, in contradistinction to 'young Athens,' with its sophistical ideas. Thus in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes (1355 — 1362), Strepsiades calls for one of the *Scholia* of Simonides, while his son treats them with contempt. A sort of sententious wisdom appears to have been aimed at by this courtly poet; a specimen of it is given in the *Republic* of Plato (p. 331), where justice is defined according to Simonides, to consist in 'paying one's debts.' It is easy to show this definition inadequate, and yet it was a beginning. The quickly developing mind of Greece could not long remain in that stage to which Simonides had attained; it was imperatively necessary that it should break away, and by force of questioning, obtain a more scientific view. We might say of the aphoristic morality of the poets and sages, what Aristotle says of the early philosophers,

namely, that 'without being skilled boxers, they sometimes gave a good blow' (*Metaphysics*, I. iv. 4).

There was another element specified by Plato in his picture of the popular morality of Greece, which we have hitherto left unnoticed, namely, the tendency to accept unworthy conceptions of religion, such as would essentially interfere with the purity and absoluteness of any ideas of right and wrong. Not only was there prevalent a belief in the enviousness and *Nemesis* of the Deity, such as forms the constant theme of the reflections of Herodotus; not only was there a superstitious hankering after signs and oracles, which tended to disturb the manly calmness of the mind; not only was there a mean and anthropomorphic conception of God, which reduced religion to hero-worship, and really stood quite beside of, and distinct from, all morality; but also there was a direct tampering with morality itself on the part of certain religious hierophants. These were the professors of mysteries, respecting whom Adeimantus is made to say in the *Republic* of Plato (p. 364 sq.), 'The most astonishing theories of all are those which you shall hear about the gods and about virtue—that the gods themselves have actually allotted to many good men misfortunes and an evil life, and to the bad a directly opposite lot. On the other hand, seers and jugglers come to the doors of the rich, and persuade them that they have a power given them by the gods of expiating by offerings and charms all offences, whether committed by a man's self or his ancestors, and this quite pleasantly—merely by holding a feast; and if any one wants to be revenged on an enemy, they will, for a trifling cost, do the fellow a harm (they say) whether he be a good man or a bad man—by forcing the gods with their incantations and spells to serve them. They cite the poets as authorities for their assertions, to prove that the path of vice is easy, and that of virtue rugged and difficult. They prove

from Homer that the gods are not inexorable, but may be turned by the prayers and offerings of men. And they adduce a whole swarm of the books of Musæus and Orpheus, the kinsmen (as they say) of Selene and of the Muses, according to which they perform their rites, and persuade not only individuals, but 'whole states, that actually by means of feasting and pleasure, expiations and releases may be provided both for the living and also for the dead, which will free men from all the penalties of the future life; but that for any one not using their rites a most horrible fate remains.'

Of the Orphic mysteries here alluded to, and of the other mysteries in general, it will not be necessary for our present purpose to say much. They appear to have originally possessed an oriental character, and to have been in themselves not without a deep meaning. They were a protest against Grecian anthropomorphism. They seem to have contained the assertion of two deep ideas, the immortality of the soul, and the impurity of sin, which required expiation. That they had become debased before becoming popular, we learn from this account of Plato. A perverted religion that offered 'masses for the soul,' and a preference to the rich over the poor,—joined with the traditional, unreflecting, and prudential morality that was rife in Greece—produced a state of feeling that made Plato say in the person of Adeimantus—'The only hope is, either if a person have a sort of inspiration of natural goodness, or obtain a scientific apprehension of the absolute difference between right and wrong.' (πλὴν εἴ τις θεῖα φύσει δυσχεραίνων τὸ ἀδικεῖν ἢ ἐπιστήμην λαβὼν ἀπέχεται αὐτοῦ. *Repub.* p. 366.)

The relation of the *Ethics* of Aristotle to the popular morality was, as we have said, rather different from that of Plato. Aristotle considers the opinion of the many worth consideration, as well as that of the philosophers. He constantly

appeals to common language in support of his theories, and common tenets he thinks worthy of either refutation or establishment. There are certain points of view with regard to morals, which are not exactly philosophical in Plato's sense of the word, but which have a sort of philosophical character, while, at the same time, they were common property; and these are made use of by Aristotle. Such are especially the lists and divisions of good, which seem to have been much discussed in Greece; as, for instance, the threefold division into goods of the mind, the body, and external (*Eth.* I. viii. 2); again, the division into the admirable (*τιμα*) and the praiseworthy (*Eth.* I. xii. 1). One list of goods, not mentioned by Aristotle, pretended to give them in their order of excellence, thus,—wisdom, health, beauty, wealth. The conception of a chief good seems to have been vaguely present before people's minds, and this no doubt determined primarily the form of the question of Aristotle's *Ethics*. This was the natural question for a Greek system of Ethics; both Plato and Aristotle tell us how wavering and inconsistent were the answers that common minds were able to give to it, when in an utterly unsystematic way it was presented to them (*Repub.* p. 505. *Ethics*, I. iv. 2).

Before taking leave of this period of unphilosophic morals, we must ask—How fared the philosophers in it? The author of the *Magna Moralia*, as we have seen, attributed to Pythagoras certain mathematical formulæ for expressing ethical conceptions. That the Pythagoreans adopted these we know from other sources, but at how late a date it seems difficult to say,<sup>12</sup>—

<sup>12</sup> A quantity of spurious Pythagorean fragments have come down to us. Patricius, in his *Discussiones Peripateticæ* (Vol. II. Book VII.), quotes these to prove that Aristotle plagia-

rized from the Pythagoreans. If the fragments were genuine, they would indeed prove wholesale plagiarism. But they are plainly mere translations of Aristotle into Doric Greek. The

perhaps not before the time of Philolaus. Of the other philosophers it may be said generally that ethical subjects did not form part of their philosophy, they made no attempt to systematize the phenomena of human society and human action. And yet they had deep thoughts on life and stood apart from other men. This standing apart was indeed their characteristic attitude. Philosophic isolation was the chief result of their reflections upon the world. The same thing, as M. Renouvier says, expresses itself in the symbolic tears of Heraclitus and the symbolic laughter of Democritus,—a doctrine of despair and of contempt. A deep feeling pervades the utterances of Heraclitus, but it is a feeling of the insignificance of man. 'The wisest man,' he says, 'is to Zeus, as an ape is to man.' In the ceaseless eddy of the creation and destruction of worlds, which he pictured to himself, individual life must have seemed as the motes in the sunbeam. He was called *ὀχλολοῖδορος* from his philosophic exclusiveness. Democritus, though a pre-Socratic philosopher, yet lived into and was influenced by the thought of the Sophistic era. He seems to have considered the human will as something apart in the world, and thus while subjecting the atoms to the power of necessity, he is reported to have said, 'Man is only a half-slave of necessity.' The chief good he considered to be *Ἀταραξία* or an unruffled serenity of mind. In a similar spirit Anaxagoras affirmed that 'he considered happiness something different from what most men supposed,

following is attributed to Archytas. οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἐστὶν εὐδαιμονία, ἀλλὰ ἡ χράσις ἀρετῆς ἐν εὐτυχίᾳ. Able as the work of Patricius is, it labours under the disadvantages of its era, criticism having as yet hardly an existence. As a specimen of his judgment—he calls it 'a lie' on the part of Aristotle

to attribute the authorship of the Ideas to Plato, since this doctrine had been known before Plato, to the Pythagoreans, Orpheus, the Chaldeans, and the Egyptians! His authorities are such works as *Iamblichus*, *Pselus*, &c.



and that they would be astonished to hear his conception of it (cf. *Eth.* x. viii. 11), meaning that it consisted not in material advantages, but in wisdom and philosophy. The moral doctrines of these early philosophers come before us in general in the form of aphorisms, they seem to belong rather to the personal character of the men than to the result of their systems.

II. We pass now from the period of unconscious morality in Greece, and enter upon the era of the Sophists. A difficult subject for discussion now presents itself. The question, What was the character and position of the Sophists? is one with regard to which it is hard to obtain the exact truth, and lately it has been made matter of controversy whether we are to trust the testimony of antiquity at all with regard to the Sophists, whether we have not been all along entertaining an illusion; whether Plato's portraits of them are not mere caricatures prompted by a spirit of antagonism, whether Aristotle's allusions to them are not a mere reproduction of the calumnies in Plato, whether, in short, the existence of what we have been accustomed to call 'Sophistry,' or the 'Sophistical spirit,' is not altogether a chimera as far as regards those personages to whom the name σοφισταὶ was first distinctively applied. To answer those doubts it will be necessary to employ as much as possible an inductive method, and to bring together the exact words of ancient authorities upon the subject.

In the term 'Sophist,' we have to deal with a word of indefinite, progressive, and variable signification. The original vagueness of its meaning in the early writers, is mentioned by Diogenes Laertius, i. 12, who says the term used to be applied to the poets. (Οἱ δὲ σοφοὶ καὶ σοφισταὶ ἐκαλοῦντο. Καὶ οὐ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ, σοφισταὶ. Καθὰ καὶ Κρατῖνος ἐν Ἀρχιλόχῳ τοὺς περὶ Ὀμηρον καὶ Ἡσίοδον

ἐπαινῶν οὕτως καλεῖ.) It is plainly distinguished from σοφός in that it implies 'one who *by profession* practises or exhibits some kind of wisdom or cleverness.' Æschylus (born 525. B.C.) makes Hermes apply the term obviously with sarcasm to Prometheus. Cf. *P. V.* 944 sqq. :—

σὲ τὸν σοφιστὴν, τὸν πικρῶς ὑπέρπικρον,  
τὸν ἐξαμαρτόντ' ἐς θεοὺς, ἐφημέροις  
πορόντα τιμὰς, τὸν πυρὸς κλέπτην λέγω.

but the sneer consists in addressing Prometheus as 'you the craftsman,' 'the planner,' 'the deviser,' when in so helpless a situation. In the same play, v. 62, it occurs without any such irony—

ἵνα  
μᾶθῃ σοφιστῆς ὧν Διὸς νωθέστερος.

'duller in his art than Zeus.' In one of the fragments of Æschylus σοφιστῆς is applied to Orpheus, denoting 'musician,' or 'master.'

Herodotus (born 484 B.C.) uses the word without any good or bad intent to denote a man distinguished for wisdom or philosophy; cf. i. 49, ἀπικνέονται ἐς Σάρδεις ἀκμαζούσας πλούτῳ ἄλλοι τε οἱ πάντες ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος σοφισταί, οἱ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον ἐτύγχανον ἔόντες, ὥς ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἀπικνέοιτο, καὶ δὴ καὶ Σόλων ἀνὴρ Ἀθηναῖος. In this passage we see that there is not the slightest allusion to the so-called 'Sophists' of the time of Socrates; οἱ πάντες ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος σοφισταί implies those who professed or were noted for any kind of intellectual ability. The term would include *literati* and statesmen, just as much as philosophers. In ii. 49, Herodotus speaks of οἱ ἐπιγενόμενοι τούτῳ (Melampus), σοφισταί, meaning something analogous to 'the Theosophists who came after him.' In iv. 95 he applies the term to Pythagoras, Ἑλλήνων οὐ τῷ ἀσθενεστάτῳ σοφιστῇ Πυθαγόρῃ, where it simply means 'philosopher.'

Aristophanes, though born probably about 449 B.C., began his

career as a writer so extremely early, that his play of the *Clouds* was brought out in 423. In this play we have a most important caricature of the Sophistic spirit as an innovating and corrupting element in the education of youth. It will be worth while to advert to this picture hereafter. At present, as we are dealing only with the name 'Sophist,' it is enough to remark that this name is *never* in the *Clouds* applied to the teachers of the thinking school (*φροντιστήριον*), which is made the subject of ridicule. The word occurs three or four times in the play. It appears in what might be called its fifth century signification. It no longer has its old indeterminate meaning of 'artist' or 'philosopher,' free from all reproach implied; nor, again, has it reached the limited Platonic sense of 'paid instructor in rhetoric and philosophy.' While it is still used to denote the 'professors' of various arts and sciences, an association of subtlety and over-refinement, in fact what we now understand by 'sophistry,' attaches to it, cf. v. 331, where it is said that the clouds are the maintainers of many such idle and dreamy professors;<sup>13</sup> in v. 361, Socrates and Prodicus are spoken of as the chief amongst the crew of subtle speculators;<sup>14</sup> in v. 1111 sq. we see expressed the popular opinion of the Sophist, *i.e.*, a pale and attenuated student;<sup>15</sup> and in v. 1306 sq., the term is applied to Strepsiades in allusion to his cheating of his creditors.<sup>16</sup>

Thucydides (born 471 B.C.) who wrote at the end of the fifth

<sup>13</sup> οὐ γὰρ μὰ Δι' αἴσθ' ὅτι κλειστοὺς  
αἴθαι βόσκουσι σοφιστάς,  
θουριομάτεις, λατροτέχνας, σφραγιδο-  
ναργακομήτας.

<sup>14</sup> σύ τε, λεπτοτάτων λήρων ἱερεῦ,  
φράζε πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὃ τι χρήσεις  
οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἄλλω γ' ὑπακούσαιμεν τῶν  
νῦν μετεωροσοφιστῶν  
πλὴν ἢ Προδίκω, τῷ μὲν σοφίας καὶ  
γνώμης οὐνεκα, κ.τ.λ.

<sup>15</sup> ΑΔ. ἀμέλει, κομῆι τοῦτον σοφ-  
ιστὴν δεξιόν.

ΦΕΙΔ. ὥχρον μὲν οὖν οἶμαι γε καὶ κα-  
κοδαίμονα.

<sup>16</sup> κούκ' ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐ τήμερόν τι  
λήψεται

πρᾶγμα δ' τοῦτον ποιήσει τὸν σοφιστὴν,  
ἀνθ' ὧν πανουργεῖν ἤρξατ' ἐξαίφνης  
κακὸν λαβεῖν τι.

century, though not much later in point of years than Herodotus, is immensely advanced beyond him in point of style and thought, and seems to belong in fact to a different era. He uses the word *σοφισταὶ* in a sense nearer to that of Plato, than Aristophanes had done, to denote those professional orators who made displays of rhetoric (*ἐπιδείξεις*) before a set audience.<sup>17</sup>

Xenophon (born about 444 B.C.), though a disciple and friend of Socrates, stood quite aloof from the transcendental philosophy of Plato. We cannot therefore attribute his opinion of the Sophists to a mere copying of Plato's descriptions, even if chronological considerations would allow this. Xenophon's point of view was totally distinct from Plato's. He rather represents the opinions of an educated Athenian of the day. The *locus classicus* in his writings with regard to the Sophists occurs at the end (as far as it remains) of the treatise on Hunting (*Cynegeticus*, c. XIII.). After descanting on the advantages of hunting as a moral training for youth, he is led to speak of the spurious teaching of 'the so-called Sophists' of his time. He says, 'They pretend to teach virtue, but their teaching is a mere pretence.'<sup>18</sup> He has never seen any one made a good man by the teaching of a Sophist.' He says, 'Many beside me find fault with the Sophists, and not with the philosophers, because the former are subtle in words and not in thoughts.'<sup>19</sup> 'They seek only reputation and gain, and do not like the philosophers teach with a dis-

<sup>17</sup> Cf. III. 38. ἀπλῶς τε ἀκοῆς ἡδονῇ ἡσώμενοι καὶ σοφιστῶν θεαταῖς εὐκό-  
τες μᾶλλον ἢ περὶ πῶλεως βουλευόμε-  
νοι.

<sup>18</sup> Θαυμάζω δὲ τῶν σοφιστῶν καλου-  
μένων ὅτι φασὶ μὲν ἐπ' ἀρετὴν ἀγεῖν οἱ  
πολλοὶ τοὺς νέους, ἀγούσι δ' ἐπὶ τούναν-  
τίον· οὕτε γὰρ ἀνδρα ποῦ εὐρῶκαμεν  
ὅντιν' οἱ νῦν σοφισταὶ ἀγαθὸν ἐποίησαν,

οὕτε γράμματα παρέχονται ἐξ ὧν χρῆ  
ἀγαθοὺς γίγνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τῶν  
ματαιῶν πολλὰ αὐτοῖς γέγραπται ἀφ'  
ὧν τοῖς νέοις αἱ μὲν ἡδοναὶ κεναὶ, ἀρετὴ  
δ' οὐκ ἐνι.

<sup>19</sup> Ψέγουσι δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ τοὺς  
νῦν σοφιστὰς καὶ οὐ τοὺς φιλοσόφους,  
ὅτι ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασι σοφίζονται καὶ οὐκ  
ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι.

interested spirit.<sup>20</sup> We see that in this passage the word 'Sophist' is used in that sense which it bears uniformly in Plato and Aristotle, namely, to denote a professional teacher, and we may also judge of the character of the instructions given by a Sophist, namely, that they mainly consisted in so-called ethical teaching (φασὶ μὲν ἐπ' ἀρετὴν ἄγειν) and in rhetoric (ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασι σοφίζονται). Xenophon testifies to their rapacious spirit, and to the general disrepute in which the profession and the name of Sophist was held (ψέγουσι δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ—ὃ ἐστὶν ὄνειδος παρὰ γε τοῖς εὖ φρονοῦσι). The charge that they 'hunted after rich young men,' may have emanated from Socrates. It is repeated in the half humorous definition of their character, given in Plato's *Sophist*.

In one passage of the *Memorabilia* Xenophon uses the word σοφιστής apparently in a less determinate sense to denote 'philosopher' (cf. *Mem.* iv. ii. 1, γράμματα πολλὰ συνειλεγμένον ποιητῶν τε καὶ σοφιστῶν τῶν εὐδοκιμωτάτων.) In *Mem.* i. i. 11, (ὁ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τῶν σοφιστῶν κόσμος), there seems to be an allusion to the technical nomenclature introduced or employed by the Sophists properly so called, i.e., the professional teachers.<sup>21</sup> In *Mem.* i. vi. 1, Xenophon speaks of Ἀντιφῶντα τὸν σοφιστήν. It is uncertain whether Antiphon of Rhamnus, the master of Thucydides, is here meant. Whoever is the person alluded to, he is described as making it a reproach to Socrates

<sup>20</sup> Οἱ σοφισταὶ δ' ἐπὶ τῷ ἑξαπατῶν λέγουσι καὶ γράφουσιν ἐπὶ τῷ ἑαυτῶν κέρδει καὶ οὐδένα οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦσιν· οὐδὲ γὰρ σοφὸς αὐτῶν ἐγένετο οὐδεὶς οὐδ' ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀρκεῖ ἐκάστῳ σοφιστὴν κληθῆναι, ὃ ἐστὶν ὄνειδος παρὰ γε τοῖς εὖ φρονοῦσι. τὰ μὲν οὖν τῶν σοφιστῶν παραγγέλματα παραινῶ φυλάττεσθαι, τὰ δὲ τῶν φιλοσόφων ἐνθυμήματα μὴ

ἀτμάζειν. οἱ μὲν γὰρ σοφισταὶ πλουσίους καὶ νέους θηρῶνται, οἱ δὲ φιλόσοφοι πᾶσι κοινοὶ καὶ φίλοι.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Plato's *Menon*, p. 85. καλοῦσι δὲ γε ταύτην διδάμετρον οἱ σοφισταί. Cf. *Protag.* p. 315, ἐφαίνοντο δὲ περὶ φύσεως τε καὶ τῶν μετεώρων ἀστρονομικὰ ἅττα διερωτῶν τὸν Ἰππιδαν.

that he asked no pay for his teachings, to which Socrates replies that the sale of wisdom is a kind of prostitution, and that those who practise it are stigmatized with the name of Sophists.<sup>23</sup> We find then in Xenophon that a definite sense (on the whole) is now attached to the name Sophist, *i.e.*, a professional teacher demanding pay for his instructions.

The next testimony we have to cite is that of Isocrates, who was born 436 B.C., and was thus seven years older than Plato. He seems to have been to some extent the pupil of Socrates, but he maintained himself afterwards by keeping a school of rhetoric, which was attended by the most distinguished pupils. His direction was entirely practical, as is evinced by frequent passages of his works, in which he expresses contempt or dislike of the speculative spirit. On the one hand he uses the term 'Sophist' in its received meaning of professional teacher, and on the other hand he is in the habit of employing it loosely and vaguely to apply to *literati* or philosophers in general. Isocrates was totally incapable of appreciating the philosophic spirit, and from his point of view, which regarded practical success as alone worth having, he ignored altogether any distinction between the philosopher and the Sophist. His aversion to speculation vents itself in a confused and indiscriminate carping at the literary profession and the philosophers. His oration *κατὰ τῶν Σοφιστῶν*, which is fragmentary, contains an attack on 'those who undertake to teach.' He ridicules the magnitude of their promises,—their imposture in offering to impart to youths virtue and the art of attaining happiness; and the absurdity of their demanding in return for these inestimable advantages, the paltry sum of three or four minæ. This class of teachers he

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<sup>23</sup> Τὴν σοφίαν ὡσαύτως τοὺς μὲν ἀρ- | φιστὰς ὥσπερ πόρνους ἀποκαλοῦσιν,  
γυρίον τῷ βουλομένῳ πωλοῦντας, σο- | κ.τ.λ.

calls the disputants, (οἱ περὶ τὰς ξριδας διατριβοντες); from them he passes on to censure those that offer to impart political discourses, being all the while themselves incompetent, and speaking as if such discourses had no relation to particular occasions, but could, like the art of writing, be acquired once for all. The reproaches he makes use of are some of them identical with those to be found in the dialogues of Plato, as, for instance, that the Sophists cannot trust those very pupils to whom they are undertaking to teach justice. He laughs at their affecting to despise wealth, and says that their mean condition, and adherence to mere verbal distinctions, has made many prefer to remain unscientific, as despising such a kind of exercise.

What Isocrates upholds, however, in contrast to this is not a deeper philosophy, but a more polished rhetoric, and he names mental qualifications for it, which are precisely such as Plato thought most undesirable. Ταῦτα δὲ πολλῆς ἐπιμελείας δεῖσθαι καὶ ψυχῆς ἀνδρικῆς καὶ δοξαστικῆς ἔργον εἶναι. In another passage (*Philippus*, § 12), Isocrates uses the term Sophist with what seems to be an undeniable allusion to Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*. Speaking of the futility of abstract political speculations, he says, ἀλλ' ὁμοίως οἱ τοιοῦτοι τῶν λόγων ἄκυροι τυγχάνουσιν ὄντες τοῖς νόμοις καὶ ταῖς πολιτείαις ταῖς ὑπὸ τῶν σοφιστῶν γεγραμμέναις. In his oration, *De Permutatione* (§ 235), he says that Solon, through his attention to rhetoric, 'came to be called one of the Seven Sophists, and took the appellation now dishonoured and censured by you,' and in § 313, he affirms that Solon was the first of the Athenians to be called a Sophist.<sup>23</sup> This last

<sup>23</sup> Οὐκ οὐν ἐπὶ γε τῶν προγόνων οὕτως εἶχεν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς καλουμένους Σοφιστὰς ἐθαύμαζον καὶ τοὺς συνόντας αὐτοῖς ἐξήλουν. Σόλωνα μὲν γὰρ, τὸν πρῶτον

τῶν πολιτῶν λαβόντα τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ταύτην προστάτην ἤξιωσαν τῆς πόλεως εἶναι.

statement is at variance with that of Plato, who makes Protagoras to have been the first who accepted the appellation 'Sophist.' The discrepancy depends on the ambiguity and change of meaning in the term. Solon may have been the first Athenian who was called Sophist, in the old sense of the word, *i.e.* philosopher. Protagoras was the first who adopted the name in its later sense, *i.e.* professional teacher of philosophy.

Hitherto we have dealt with what might be called the external side of the character of the Sophists. We have seen the impression they produced upon cultivated men, who were not troubled to estimate very deeply their tendencies, viewed as a direction or 'moment' in philosophy. In Aristophanes we have seen them broadly caricatured, and Socrates mixed up with them as their representative. By Thucydides they are alluded to as rhetoricians, exhibiting their displays of art before an audience. Xenophon, as a gentleman and a soldier, expresses contempt for a set of men, whom he regards as impostors in teaching, while, on the other hand, he respects the philosopher who is free from all mercenary motives. Isocrates speaks of them partly with the bitterness of a rival teacher, and one who has experienced hostility<sup>24</sup> from some of them, and partly he despises the useless and unpractical character of their teaching, its empty pretence, and idle verbal subtleties. Passing on now to Plato, we shall first be able to gain much additional information from him as to this same external side of the Grecian Sophists; afterwards we shall learn from him to appreciate the inner essence of that spirit which he calls ἡ σοφιστική, and which may undoubtedly be looked upon as an actual phase of human thought, by no means confined to the age of Socrates.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *De Permutatione*, § 2. 'Εγὼ γὰρ εἰδὼς ἐπ' αὐτοῖς τῶν σοφιστῶν βλασφη-

μοῦντας περὶ τῆς ἐμῆς διατριβῆς καὶ λέγοντας ὡς ἔστι περὶ δικογραφίαν.



It has been a common mistake to understand, under the name of 'the Sophists' certain particular individuals, Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, Hippias, Polus, Thrasymachus, and one or two others, who figure in the dialogues of Plato. Enough has been said to show that in earlier writers the name is never used to indicate a sect in philosophy, and it is equally true that in Plato it is the name of a profession, not of a sect; nor is it ever restricted by him to the above-mentioned individuals, who are merely eminent members of what was indeed a very wide-spread profession. In the *Meno*, p. 91, Socrates is made to speak as if Protagoras was not by any means even the first of the Sophists, καὶ οὐ μόνον Πρωταγόρας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλλοι πάμπολλοι οἱ μὲν πρότερον γεγονότες ἐκείνου, οἱ δὲ καὶ νῦν ἔτι ὄντες. And by a still more remarkable mode of speaking in the *Ethics* of Aristotle ix. i. 5-7, Protagoras appears to be in a sort of way contrasted with the Sophists.<sup>25</sup> It is true that Plato represents Protagoras to have been the first to assume openly the name of Sophist (cf. *Protag.* p. 317), but he also gives a humorous picture in the same dialogue, p. 314, of the crowds of Sophists flocking to the house of Callias, so that the porter mistaking Socrates and Hippocrates for members of the profession, would scarcely open the door to them.<sup>26</sup> Within the house they find a conclave of persons, 'most of them foreigners whom Protagoras, like another Orpheus, had drawn after him from their own cities'—amongst others, 'Antimærus the Mendeian, the most famous of the pupils of Protagoras, who

<sup>25</sup> 'Ὁ γὰρ προϊέμενος ἔοικ' ἐπιτρέπειν ἐκείνῳ. "Ὅπερ φασὶ καὶ Πρωταγόραν ποιεῖν" ὅτε γὰρ διδάξειεν ἄδηποτε, τιμῆσαι τὸν μαθόντα ἐκέλευεν ὅσον δοκεῖ ἄξια ἐπίστασθαι, καὶ ἐλάμβανε τοσοῦτον. Οἱ δὲ προλαβόντες τὸ ἀργύριον, εἴτα μὴθὲν ποιοῦντες ὡν ἔφασαν, διὰ τὰς ὑπερβολὰς τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν, εἰκότως

ἐν ἐγκλήμασι γίνονται· οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτελοῦσιν ἃ ὡμολόγησαν. Τοῦτο δ' ἴσως ποιεῖν οἱ σοφισταὶ ἀναγκάζονται διὰ τὸ μὴθένα ἂν δοῦναι ἀργύριον ὧν ἐπίστανται.

<sup>26</sup> 'Ἐα, ἔφη, σοφισταὶ τινες' οὐ σχολῇ αὐτῷ—'Ἀλλ' ὦ 'γαθέ, ἔφη, οὔτε παρὰ Καλλίαν ἤκομεν οὔτε σοφισταὶ ἐσμεν, ἀλλὰ θάρρε.

was learning with professional objects, meaning to be a Sophist (ἐπὶ τέχνη μανθάνει, ὡς σοφιστῆς ἐσόμενος.) Protagoras takes great merit to himself for openly declaring his art, for he confesses 'that a certain amount of envy attaches to it; that, going about drawing away youths from their kindred and connexions under the promise of making them better if they associated with him—he was likely to be assailed with hostility; old as he is, however, no harm has ever come to him on account of his candour.' (pp. 316-317.)

It is interesting to trace in Plato the indications of general opinion about the Sophists. In spite of their great success he represents them to have been held in dislike and suspicion by persons of honour, who at the same time made no pretensions to philosophy. This feeling is instinctively expressed by the young Hippocrates (*Protag.* p. 312), who being asked whether he is going to Protagoras in order himself to become a Sophist, confesses that he should consider this a great disgrace.<sup>27</sup> By Callicles, in the *Gorgias* (p. 519), a sweeping contempt is expressed for 'those who profess to teach virtue;' Socrates asks, 'Is it not absurd in them to find fault with the conduct of those whom they have undertaken to make virtuous?' Callicles replies, 'Of course it is, but why should you speak about a set of men, who are absolutely worthless?' Socrates answers, 'Because I find the procedure of the Sophist and the Rhetorician identically the same.' In the *Meno* the question being, Is virtue teachable? Socrates argues that if it be so, there must be teachers of it, and inquires of Anytus, 'To whom shall we send Meno to learn virtue from? Whether to the Sophists?' Anytus repudiates the idea, since 'these corrupt all who come near them.'<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Σὺ δέ, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, πρὸς θεῶν, οὐκ ἂν αἰσχύναιο εἰς τοὺς Ἕλληνας αὐτὸν σοφιστὴν παρέχων; Νῆ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἴπερ γε ἂ διανοοῦμαι χρὴ λέγειν.

<sup>28</sup> P. 91. σκόπει παρὰ τινὰς ἂν πέμποντες αὐτὸν ὀρθῶς πέμπομεν. ἡ δὴλον δὲ κατὰ τὸν ἄρτι λόγον, ὅτι παρὰ τούτους τοὺς ὑπισχνουμένους ἀρετῆς διδασκάλους εἶναι καὶ ἀποφάντας αὐ-

Socrates, in reply to this, urges, 'How is it possible this should be true of the Sophists;—a cobbler who professed to mend shoes but made them worse, would be found out in less than thirty days, how then could Protagoras have remained undetected and maintained so great a reputation and made so great a fortune, deceiving the whole of Greece for more than forty years? At all events, must we not concede that if they do harm to others, they do so unconsciously, and are like men insane?' To this Anytus answers, 'That *they* are insane who give money to the Sophists, and still more so the states who allow them to practise their art.' Socrates says, 'Some one of the Sophists must have wronged you, Anytus, or you would not be so bitter.' Anytus says, 'No, I never had anything to do with them.' Socrates asks, 'How then can you know what they are like?' Anytus says, 'Oh, I know well enough what they are like without having had anything to do with them.' Socrates implies that Anytus is speaking not from knowledge but prejudice. He dismisses the subject by adding, 'after all, there is perhaps something in what you say,' (καὶ ἴσως τι λέγεις. *Meno*, p. 92).

In this discussion it is observable that the abuse of the Sophists is put into the mouth of Anytus, the accuser of Socrates, who may be looked at as the representative of conservative feeling in Athens. Full justice is done in the dialogue (*Meno*, p. 90) to the eminence of his position, his wealth, and political influence. But afterwards, dramatically, his arbitrary, narrow, and unfair turn of mind comes out. Evidently we

τοὺς κοινούς τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῷ βουλο-  
μένῳ μανθάνειν, μισθὸν τοῦτου ταξαμέ-  
νους τε καὶ πραττομένους; ΑΝ. Καὶ  
τίνας λέγεις τούτους ὧ Σώκρατες; ΣΩ.  
Οἴσθα δήπου καὶ σὺ ὅτι οὗτοι εἰσιν  
οἷους οἱ ἄνθρωποι καλοῦσι σοφιστάς.  
ΑΝ. Ἡράκλεις, εὐφήμεϊ, ὦ Σώκρατες.

μηδένα τῶν συγγενῶν, μήτε οἰκείων  
μήτε φίλων, μήτε ἀσπὸν μήτε ξένον,  
τοιαύτη μανία λάβοι, ὥστε παρὰ τοῦ-  
τους ἐλθόντα λαμβηθῆναι, ἐπεὶ οὗτοι γὰρ  
φανερὰ ἐστὶ λώβη τε καὶ διαφθορά τῶν  
συγγινομένων.

cannot say that in the *Meno*, Plato calumniates the Sophists or vilifies them as opponents and rivals of Socrates. Rather he makes it appear that there is something hasty and inconsidered in the popular feeling against them (which is a true, but blundering instinct), and that the philosopher must consider their claims, their tendencies, and the phenomena of their success from a deeper point of view.

To a similar purport Socrates is made to speak in the *Republic* (p. 492), where he says to Adeimantus, 'Perhaps you think with the multitude that youths are corrupted by Sophists, and do not perceive that Society is itself the greatest Sophist, educating and moulding young and old. What Sophist or private instructor could withstand the powerful voice of the world? Don't you see that the so-called Sophists do nothing else but follow public opinion? They teach nothing else but the popular dogmas. They are like keepers of a wild beast, who, when they have studied his moods and learned to understand his noises, call this a system and a philosophy.' The common accusation had been that the Sophists unsettled young men's opinions, and turned them away from the established beliefs. Socrates implies, 'I am willing to exonerate them from this. Rather I have to complain that the Sophists are too unsophisticated, that they are too much merely echoes of the popular voice; that they have *'plus que personne, l'esprit que tout le monde a.'*'

Viewed externally the Sophists presented the appearance of a set of teachers, such as first appeared in Greece towards the middle of the fifth century B.C. (Protagoras was born about B.C. 480, and began to practise his art in his thirtieth year, but there were others before him). They were for the most part itinerant teachers, going from city to city. They would make displays of their rhetoric (*ἐπιδείξεις*), and then invite the youths of their audience to come and receive in-

struction with a view to becoming able men in the state (*δεινοί, habiles homines, &c.*). Their instructions were various, rhetoric and dialectic, ethics, music, and physical science. Some, such as Hippias, professed a pantological knowledge, others, as Gorgias, confined themselves to rhetoric. Their profits no doubt varied with their success, some must have been ill-paid and wretched, as represented by Aristophanes and Isocrates. The leading members of the profession seem to have made large sums of money. On this point, however, Isocrates is at direct issue with Plato. Socrates says in the *Meno*, p. 91, that 'he knew of Protagoras gaining greater wealth by his profession than Phidias and ten other sculptors put together.' And in the *Hippias Major* (p. 282-283) Prodicus is said to have made immense sums;<sup>29</sup> Hippias is made to boast that 'when quite a young man he made in Sicily, in a short space of time, more than 150 minæ (£450), and that in one little village, Inycus, he made more than 20 minæ' (£60). He adds, however, 'that he supposes he has made more than any two Sophists put together.' In contradiction to this picture, Isocrates gives a much more limited account of the pecuniary success of the Sophists. He says (*De Permutatione*, 155-156), 'Not one of the so-called Sophists will be found to have amassed much money. Some of them lived in small, others in very moderate circumstances. Gorgias of Leontium made the most on record. He lived in Thessaly, where people were very rich, attained a great age, was long given up to his business, had no settled habitation in any state, paid no taxes nor contribution, had no wife nor children, and so was free from this the most continual tax of all—and with these advantages beyond others for acquiring a fortune, he only left behind him at the last 1000 staters' (£125?). This oration was written

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<sup>29</sup> Τοῖς νεαῖς συνὼν χρήματα ἔλαβε θαυμαστὰ ὄσα. Cf. Xen. *Symp.* I. 5, IV. 62.

in the eighty-second year of Isocrates' life, and probably much later than the above-mentioned dialogues of Plato; the fame of the achievements of the Sophists was therefore less fresh. Isocrates, being himself a paid teacher, was complaining of the difficulty of making enough, he was therefore not likely to take a sanguine view of success in this department; also, it is credible that the Sophists did, as is usually the case with persons whose gains are irregular, not save much or leave much behind them. Hence we need not find a great difficulty in the discrepancy of the two statements. Plato represents popular rumours and external surprise at the success of a new profession; Isocrates, taking the other side, goes into details and shows that in the long run there was nothing so very wonderful effected, after all.

With regard to the reproach against the Sophists, that their teaching for money at all was something discreditable—an argument has been raised, that this is really no reproach, as the practice of so many respectable men among the moderns may serve to testify. But we should endeavour to put ourselves into the position of the ancients, and the following considerations may help us to do so. (1) The practice of the Sophists was an innovation, and jarred on men's feelings. There was something that to the natural prejudices of the mind seemed more beautiful in the old simple times, when wisdom, if imparted, was given as a gift. As soon as the Sophists began their career, the fine and free spirit of the old philosophers seemed gone. When Hippias boasts of his gains, Socrates ironically replies, 'Dear me, how much wiser men of the present day are than those of old time. You seem to be just the reverse of Anaxagoras. For he is said to have had a fortune left him and to have lost it all, such a poor Sophist was he (*οὕτως αὐτὸν ἀνόητα σοφίζεσθαι*), and other such stories are told of the ancients.'

(*Hipp. Major*, p. 283.) (2) With the Sophists systematic education began for the first time. Undoubtedly this was a necessity. But it is equally true that about the administration of systematic education there is something that appears at first sight slavish and mechanical. The Greeks had not yet learned those principles according to which a sense of duty will dignify the meanest tasks. They tested things too exclusively in reference to the standard of the fine and the noble (καλόν). (3) But it was not simply the office of the paid schoolmaster that was disliked in the Sophist. We do not find that the teachers of gymnastics or of harp-playing were held in disrepute. Those who kept schools for boys were looked down upon, it is true,<sup>30</sup> but were not identified with the Sophists. The latter taught not boys, but youths; again they taught not the necessary rudiments, but something more pretentious—wisdom, philosophy, political skill, virtue, and the conduct of life. To make a market of the highest subjects and of divine philosophy, seemed to men like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, little less than a sort of simony. There was a charlatanism in the offer to teach these things to all comers, which was from different causes equally offensive to ordinary men and to the philosophers. Men like Anytus and Aristophanes complained that the Sophists corrupted youth by teaching them subtleties and unsettling their opinions. In this complaint there was a part of the truth. The philosophers added the other side, by complaining that the Sophists were shallow and rhetorical, that they flattered popular prejudices instead of displacing them. The Sophists were vilipended by the philosophers not merely as paid teachers, but as paid charlatans.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Demosthenes *de Corona*, p.  
313.

<sup>31</sup> Ὁ δὲ σοφιστὴς χρηματιστὴς ἀπὸ

φαινομένης σοφίας, ἀλλ' οὐκ οὐσίας.  
Aristotle, *Soph. Elench.*

The most characteristic and prominent creation of the Sophistic era was, in one word, rhetoric. But as rhetoricians, the Sophists were themselves the creatures of their times. Circumstances were ripe in the Greek states for the development of this new direction of the human mind, and it came. Cicero (*Brutus*, c. 12) quoting from Aristotle's lost work, the *Συναγωγή τεχνῶν*, tells us that Rhetoric took its rise in Sicily, 'when after the expulsion of the tyrants (*i. e.* Thrasybulus, B.C. 467), many lawsuits arose with regard to the claims of citizens now returning from banishment and who had been dispossessed of their property. The incessant litigation which this led to, caused Corax and Tisias to draw up systems of the art of speaking; (for before this time there had been careful speaking and even written speeches, but no fixed method or *rationale*.) Hence also Protagoras came to write his common-places of oratory and Gorgias his encomia,' Everywhere in Greece circumstances were analogous to those in Sicily. Personal freedom gave rise to the contests of the law courts. Nothing was more necessary than that a citizen should be able to defend his own cause. The demand for instruction in rhetoric, and for the development of all its arts, means, and appliances was met everywhere by the Sophists.

Hence the impression they produced on the national speech and thought was almost unspeakably great. To trace the technical changes and advances in the various systems from Corax to Isocrates, belongs to the history of rhetoric. It will suffice for the present purpose to make a few remarks on the Sophistical rhetoric in its relation to life and modes of thought. Two separate tendencies seem to have manifested themselves from the very outset among the masters of composition. On the one hand, the Sicilian school represented by Gorgias of Leontium, Polus of Agrigentum, and their follower, Alcidas of Elæa, in Asia Minor, aimed at *εὐπρέπεια*,



'fine speaking.' On the other hand, the Greek school, led by Protagoras, Prodicus, and Hippias, devoted themselves more especially to ὀρθοέπεια, 'correct speaking.' From these opposite but concurrent tendencies arose that which may be called 'style' in Greece, and which did not exist before the middle of the fifth century.

The achievements of Protagoras and the 'Greek' rhetoricians seem to have amounted to no less than the foundation of grammar, etymology, philology, the distinction of terms, prosody, and literary criticism. In judging of the so-called verbal quibbles of the Sophists, we have to transport ourselves to a time anterior to the commonest abstractions of grammar and logic. Protagoras was the first to introduce that thinking upon words which was one manifestation of the subjective tendencies of the day. His work, entitled Ὀρθοέπεια (which is mentioned by Plato, *Phædrus*, p. 267), most probably contained a variety of speculations, as well philological as grammatical. And even his Ἀλήθεια appears from Plato's *Cratylus* (p. 391) to have touched upon etymological questions. From Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, III. 5, we learn that Protagoras was the first to classify the genders of nouns, calling them ἄρρενα, θήλεα, and σκεύη. From *Soph. Elench.* XIV. § 1, we learn that he considered the terminations -ις and -ηξ ought to be appropriated to the masculine gender, so that to say μῆνιν οὐλομένην would be a solecism. In the *Clouds* of Aristophanes (v. 668—692), Socrates is ludicrously introduced as following out these ideas, and wishing to alter the termination of κάρδοπος and ἀλεκτρυών to suit the feminine gender. Another of the grammatical performances of Protagoras was the classification of the λόγος or 'form of speech,' into question, answer, command, and prayer (Diogenes Laert. ix. 52), a classification which seems to have had some affinity with that of the moods of verbs. The allusions in the *Clouds* to the art of metres,

versification, and rhythms, seem to imply the practice of similar studies in the school of Protagoras. Lastly, his speculations in etymology and language seem to have been made in support of his philosophical doctrine of 'knowing and being,'—*πάντων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος* (cf. Plato's *Cratylus*, *l.c.*).

Prodicus, who is said to have been the master of Socrates (cf. *Protagoras*, p. 341, *Hippias Major*, p. 282), was famous for his distinctions between words of cognate signification and apparently synonymous. He is reported to have said 'that a right use of words is the beginning of knowledge' (*πρῶτον γὰρ, ὥς φησι Πρόδικος, περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος μαθεῖν δεῖ, Euthydem.* p. 277). In Plato's *Protagoras*, p. 337, a speech is put into his mouth, which exhibits an amusing caricature of his style. Every sentence contains a verbal refinement, and is thrown back on itself, in order to furnish out some antithetical distinction in language. 'We must be impartial, but not indifferent listeners (*κοινοὺς μὲν εἶναι, ἴσους δὲ μὴ*). The speakers should dispute, not wrangle (*ἀμφισβητεῖν μὲν, ἐρίζειν δὲ μὴ*). So they will gain our esteem, rather than our applause (*εὐδοκιμοῦτε καὶ οὐκ ἐπαινοῦσθε*), and we shall feel rather joy than pleasure (*εὐφραίνομεθα, οὐχ ἡδoύμεθα*).'

In themselves, many of the distinctions drawn by Prodicus were probably of little value—many were overstrained, and even false; cf. *Charmides*, p. 163, where a distinction is given which is said to be after the manner of Prodicus. It is between *ποίησις* and *πρᾶξις*—*πρᾶξις* is defined to be *ποίησις τῶν ἀγαθῶν*, but we must acknowledge the merit of this first attempt at separating the different shades of language, and fixing a nomenclature. The powerful influence of this example (not always a healthy one) may be traced in the style of Thucydides. And its full development was attained in the accurate terminology of Aristotle.

The short speech assigned to Hippias in the *Protagoras* of

Plato (p. 337), and that in *Hipp. Maj.* p. 282, being obvious caricatures, give us still a conception of his manner. He appears to have united some of the splendour of the Sicilian school to the self-conscious and introverted writing of the Greek rhetoricians. This combination gives the sentences attributed to him a shadowy resemblance to the style of Thucydides, as, for instance, the following:—*ἡμᾶς οὖν αἰσχροὺν τὴν μὲν φύσιν τῶν πραγμάτων εἰδέναι, σοφωτάτους δὲ ὄντας τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ κατ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο νῦν συνεληλυθότας τῆς τε Ἑλλάδος εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ πρυτανεῖον τῆς σοφίας καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς πόλεως εἰς τὸν μέγιστον καὶ ὀλβιώτατον οἶκον τόνδε, μηδὲν τούτου τοῦ ἀξιώματος ἄξιον ἀποφύνασθαι.* Of course here the pomp of the words covers vapidness of thought, but one can see the outward husk and hollow shell of style.

The influence of Gorgias upon the writers of Greece probably exceeded that of any other Sophist. After his first essays in speculation, he appears to have renounced philosophy and to have proclaimed himself a teacher of rhetoric. He was chosen by his countrymen, the Leontines, to come as ambassador to Athens in the year 427 B.C., asking aid against Syracuse. Thucydides (III. 68), with his usual reserve on all matters the least extraneous, makes no mention of his name. Diodorus (XII. 53) has the following remarks on this event:—‘At the head of the envoys was Gorgias the rhetorician, a man who far surpassed all his contemporaries in oratorical skill; he also was the first inventor of the art of rhetoric. He amazed the Athenians, quick-witted and fond of oratory as they were (*ὄντας εὐφυεῖς καὶ φιλολόγους*), by the strangeness (*τῷ ξενίζοντι*) of his language, by his extraordinary *ἀντίθετα*, and *ισόκωλα*, and *πάρισα*, and *ὁμοιοτέλευτα*, and other figures of the same kind, which at that time from the novelty of their style were deemed worthy of adoption, but are now looked upon as affected and ridiculous when used

in such nauseous superabundance.' The speeches of Gorgias were thus most elaborately constructed, and in addition to their almost metrical character, bordered upon poetry also in their use of metaphors and of compound words. Aristotle comments upon the fault of writing prose as if it were poetry, and he severely says that this was done by the first prose writers because they observed how great was the success of poets in covering by their diction the emptiness of their thoughts.<sup>32</sup> Aristotle in another place quotes from Gorgias and from Alcidas, his follower, several instances of what he calls 'frigidity' (*ψυχρότης*, *Rhet.* III. 1), produced by pompous or poetical words and compounds. He also mentions two of the rhetorical tricks of Gorgias. One was that Gorgias boasted he could never be at a loss in speaking, 'for if he is speaking of Achilles, he praises Peleus,' *i.e.*, he will go off from his subject into something collateral (*Rhet.* III. xvii. 2). The other device was one full of shrewdness; he said, 'You should silence your adversary's earnestness with jest, and his jest with earnest.'<sup>33</sup> Among the imitators of Gorgias were Agathon and Isocrates. The speech of Agathon in the *Symposium* of Plato is an example of the extreme of the flowery style. Socrates remarks at its conclusion, that he has been almost petrified by the speaking Gorgias (*i.e.* Gorgon's) head which Agathon has presented to him. The influence of Gorgias may also be extensively detected in the antitheses (often forced), the balance of sentences, and the occasionally poetical diction of Thucydides.

Rhetoric, viewed historically, considered as a thinking about

<sup>32</sup> *Rhet.* III. i. 9. 'Ἐπεὶ δ' οἱ ποιηταὶ λέγοντες εὐήθη διὰ τὴν λέξιν ἐδοκοῦν πορίσασθαι τήνδε τὴν δόξαν, διὰ τοῦτο ποιητικὴ πρώτη ἐγένετο λέξις, οἷον ἡ Γοργίου.

<sup>33</sup> *Rhet.* III. xviii. 7. Καὶ δεῖν ἔφη Γοργίας τὴν μὲν σπουδὴν διαφθεῖρειν τῶν ἐναντίων γέλῳτι, τὸν δὲ γέλῳτα σπουδῇ.

words and the possibilities of language, was by no means, as we have seen, coeval with the origin of states and of human thought. It was a somewhat late product of civilization. But it was a path which there was an inherent necessity for opening and exploring. From this point of view, thanks are due to the more eminent Sophists for their contributions towards the formation of Grecian prose style, for developing the idea of the *period*, and bringing under the domain of art that which before was left uncultivated. If in their own writing ornament was overdone, they may be considered in this, as in other things, to occupy a transition place, and to have served as pioneers to others.

But there is yet another aspect in which rhetoric must be regarded, and that is, not merely as an affair of words and sentences, but as a direction and phase of thought itself. It consists in attention to form, producing neglect of matter—in striving for the brilliant and the plausible, instead of for the true—in decking out stale thoughts with a fresh outer garment of words—in enforcing a conclusion without having tested the premises. This takes up the arts of the lawyer into the philosopher's or the teacher's chair; it covers its ignorance with a cloak of verbosity; it will never confess there is anything it does not know. This most truly keeps the key of knowledge, and will neither enter in itself nor let other men come in. It speaks things which it does not feel; its utterances come from the fancy, and not from the heart; its pictures are not taken from nature; its metaphors are unnecessary; its pathos is hollow. If language be looked on as not separate from thought, but identical with it, then is rhetoric false thought, as opposed to true. There are, no doubt, various degrees and stages of rhetorical falsehood. The highest kind is that which consists in some slight exaggeration in a word or an expression. This often takes place in cases where a speaker or writer

fully and sincerely believes the general import of what he is asserting; but in setting forth the separate parts he allows himself to quit the stern simplicity of what he actually feels. Again, when a foregone conclusion has lost its freshness, rhetoric is called in in the hope of enlivening it. The most flagrant rhetorical falsity would, of course, consist in the advocacy of propositions which the speaker not only did not believe (in the sense of not feeling or realizing them), but absolutely disbelieved. As men are not fiends, this is extremely rare. Rhetoric usually juggles the mind of the speaker as well as of his audience. It takes off the attention of both from examining the truth. It is, for the most part, well-meaning, and is much rather a defender than an impugner of the common orthodox opinions. Hence it was that Plato defined rhetoric to be a trick of flattering the populace. Hence, also, he said that the Sophists studied the humours of society, as one might study the temper of a wild beast. In the practice of the Sophists, Plato saw rhetoric and Sophistry<sup>34</sup> identical. Sophistry consisted in substituting rhetoric for philosophy, words for thoughts (*ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασι σοφίζονται καὶ οὐκ ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι*. Xen. *Cyneget.* l. c.). With Plato, philosophy was a higher kind of poetry, in which reason and imagination both found their scope. With the Sophists, it was an harangue (*ἐπίδειξις*) upon any given subject, with figures and periods to catch applause. Aristotle, indeed, was enabled afterwards to look at rhetoric in a mere abstract way, as the art of composition, and so to separate the rhetorician from the Sophist, since it was not necessary that rhetoric should be used in a Sophistical spirit. But Plato always regards rhetoric as a false impulse in human thought; he always considers it in the concrete, and never as a mere instrument to be used and abused. And that

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. *Gorgias*, p. 529. τὰντων, ὡ μακάρι', ἐστὶ σοφιστὴς καὶ ῥήτωρ.

the rhetorical spirit is a reality, attaching itself above all to the highest subjects, to philosophy and religion, and, like 'the bloom of decay,' luxuriantly overgrowing them,—this the experience of all ages and of every thinking man can testify.

If Aristotle does not identify rhetoric with Sophistry, he yet very distinctly acknowledges the existence of the latter as a phase of thought. He does not, however, any more than Plato, speak of definite doctrines belonging to the Sophists, as if they were a school of philosophers with their own metaphysical or ethical creed. When he says 'Some persons think justice to be a mere conventional distinction' (*Eth.* v. vii. 2), or 'Hence they call justice our neighbour's good,' (*Eth.* v. vi. 6), we are accustomed to assert that 'Aristotle is here alluding to the Sophists,' but he himself never speaks in this way of the *doctrines* of the Sophists. He speaks repeatedly of their *practice*, of their method, of certain tricks in argument commonly used by them; he says that in their teaching they put rhetoric on a level with Politics. Again, he treats of the position of Protagoras as a definite philosophical dogma, but as peculiar to Protagoras, not as common to the Sophists. Lastly he speaks of 'Sophistic' as a particular tendency or method in thought, which he compares with dialectic and with philosophy. Aristotle in all that he says about the Sophistical spirit no doubt accepts, analyses, and reduces to method much that is to be found in the Platonic dialogues. But it would be a most unwarrantable scepticism to consider Aristotle's statements a mere blind repetition of certain calumnies or hostile caricatures. Such an opinion would not only go against all historical evidence, but it would ignore most ungratefully one of the deepest utterances and most significant lessons of ancient philosophy. Truly if Sophistry be a chimera, we had better close at once the volume of Plato.

Sophistry, as represented in the person of the two most eminent Sophists, sprang almost simultaneously from the north and the south. Also it may be said to have derived its origin more or less immediately from two directly opposite schools of previous thinkers. Protagoras of Abdera starts from the principle of Heraclitus that all is becoming; Gorgias of Leontium took up the Eleatic principle of absolute unity. Both Protagoras and Gorgias may be considered to have held their character as philosophers in some measure distinct from their professional character as rhetoricians and teachers, and yet the results of their philosophizing coloured their teaching. The philosophy of the two can never be said to have amalgamated, and yet it exhibits a common element. An accurate statement of the doctrine of Protagoras appears in the *Theætetus* of Plato, which is intended to refute it, but which at the same time treats its author with all respect. We see at once that it was a profound doctrine, and of the greatest importance as a 'moment' in philosophy. Heraclitus had said that all is motion, or becoming,—Protagoras analyses this becoming into its two sides, the active and the passive, in other words the objective and subjective. Nothing exists absolutely, things attain an existence by coming in contact with and acting on an organ of sensation, that is, a subject. Thus all existence is merely relative, and depends in each case on a relation to the individual percipient; and therefore 'man is the measure of all things, of the existent that they exist, and of things non-existent that they do not exist.' This proposition on the one hand contains the germ of all philosophy, on the other hand it renders philosophy impossible by reducing all knowledge and existence to mere sensation. It contains the germ of all philosophy by asserting that all knowledge, and therefore all existence, as far as we can conceive it, consists in the relation between an object and



a subject, that every object implies a subject and every subject an object. This cannot be gainsaid, and it is in short one of the main purposes of philosophy to lift men out of their common unreflecting belief in the *absolute* existence of external objects, into so much idealism as this. But the principle of Protagoras falls short in its misconception and too great limiting of the subjective side of existence. Objects exist only in relation to a subject, but not necessarily in relation to individual perceptions. If individual perception is the measure of all things, the same object will be capable of contradicting qualities at the same moment according as it *appears* different to different individuals; a thing can then be and not be at the same time; the distinction between true and false will be done away; even denial (*ἀντιλέγειν*) must cease. Protagoras acknowledged these results; he said, 'What appears true to a person is true to him. I cannot call it false, I can only endeavour to make his perceptions, not truer but better, *i.e.*, such as are more expedient for him to entertain.'

Man is indeed the measure of all things, not the individual man with his changeable and erring perceptions, but the universal reason of man, manifesting itself more or less distinctly in the deepest intuitions of those who are pure and wise, and who attain most nearly to the truth. The principle of Protagoras, by calling attention to the subjective side of knowledge, led the way to what has been called 'critical' philosophy, to a critic of cognition itself; and this was a great advance upon former systems, which regarded knowledge and existence too much as if absolutely objective. But Protagoras himself rested in sensationalism, and becoming from his own system sceptical about truth altogether, he seems to have returned (as above-mentioned), to mere principles of expediency. His sensational theory and his scepticism about knowledge are not to be regarded as Sophistical, in the Platonic sense of the word.

But with this sceptical foundation to all theories, to commence teaching virtue; to have thus reduced virtue to a matter of expediency for daily life—to have combined such acute penetration with so little moral or scientific earnestness—after exploding philosophy to have fallen back upon popular and prudential Ethics—this indeed was to exhibit many of the essential features of that Sophistry against which Plato directed all his strength. We see traces of the same spirit—of acute and active intellect combined with a certain trifling and unreality upon the gravest subjects—in the well-known sentence of Protagoras on the gods: ‘Respecting the gods, I neither know whether they exist or do not exist; for there is much that hinders this knowledge; namely, the obscurity of the subject, and the shortness of human life.’<sup>35</sup> This scepticism, as far as we can conjecture its tendency, does not consist in denying the Grecian Polytheism in order to substitute in its place some deeper conception. It cannot, therefore, be considered parallel to the philosophical contempt of Xenophanes and others for the fables of Paganism. Protagoras despairs of a theology, and proclaims his despair, and falls back upon practical success.

The celebrated thesis of Gorgias, which formed the subject of his book ‘On Nature, or the Non-existent,’ and of which a sketch is preserved in the treatise, called Aristotle’s, *De Xenophane, Zenone, et Gorgia*, and also in Sextus Empiricus (*ad. Math.* vii. 65), is one of the most startling utterances of antiquity. It consists of three propositions. (1) Nothing exists. (2) If it does exist, it cannot be known. (3) If it can be known, it cannot be communicated.<sup>36</sup> The extravagant character of this position was denounced by Isocrates in the

<sup>35</sup> Diog. Laert. ix. 51, Sext. Emp. *adv. Math.* ix. 56.

<sup>36</sup> Οὐκ εἶναι φησιν οὐδέν· εἰ δ’ ἔστιν,

ἀγνωστον εἶναι· εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔστι καὶ γνωστόν, ἀλλ’ οὐ δηλωτόν· ἀλλὰ, Arist. *De Xenophane*, &c.

opening of his *Helen*. He is speaking of the inveterate habit of defending paradoxes which had so long prevailed, and he asks, 'Who is so behind-hand (*ὀψιμαθής*) as not to know that Protagoras and the Sophists of that time left us compositions of the kind I have named, and even more vexatious? for how could any one surpass the audacity of Gorgias, who dared to say that nothing of existing things exists?' Isocrates adds to the name of Gorgias, those of Zeno and Melissus; he had before specified as ridiculous paradoxes the theses that 'it is impossible to speak falsehood'—that 'it is impossible to deny'—that 'all virtue is one'—that 'virtue is a science.' Elsewhere (*De Permutat.* § 268), he mentions as the 'theories of the old Sophists,' that 'the number of existences was according to Empedocles, four; according to Ion, three; according to Alcmeon, two; according to Parmenides and Melissus, one; according to Gorgias, absolutely none.' We see then that the point of view which Isocrates takes is, that of so-called common sense, and practical life—that he declines to enter upon philosophical questions at all. He regards the absolute Nihilism of Gorgias as belonging to the same sphere of thought, only a more flagrant development of it, as the doctrine, 'all virtue is a science.' It is always easy to set aside philosophical views as repugnant to common sense, as mere subtleties and useless paradoxes. But if we enter on philosophy at all, we must accept the dialectic of the reason. The difficulties into which it may lead us must not be rejected as subtleties, but acknowledged, and if possible reconciled, with the views of common sense.

Philosophy before Gorgias, had been occupied with an abstract conception of Being, whether as One or Many. The dialectic of the Eleatics had been directed to establish, against all testimony of the senses, that the only existence possible is one immutable Being. On the other hand, the Ionics maintained the plurality of existences; and Heraclitus especially

held the exact contrary to the Eleatic view, that there was no permanence or unity, but all was plurality and becoming. The dialectic of Gorgias coming in here explodes all philosophy by a demonstration that 'nothing exists.' This part of his position he appears to have maintained by bringing Eleatic arguments against the Ionic hypothesis, and Ionic arguments against the Eleatic hypothesis.<sup>37</sup> 'If there is existence (εἰ δ' ἔστι), it must be either Not-being or Being. It cannot be Not-being, else Being will be identical with Not-being. It cannot be Being, for then it must be either One or Many, either created or uncreate. It cannot be One, for One implies divisibility, *i. e.*, plurality. It cannot be Many, for the Many is based upon the unit of which it is only the repetition, and is so essentially One. Again, it cannot be created, for it must either be created out of the existent or the non-existent. It cannot be the former, else it would have existed already. It cannot be the latter, for nothing can come from the non-existent. Nor can it be Uncreate, for that implies its being Infinite, and the Infinite can have no existence in space.' These arguments are not to be looked at as a mere wanton sporting with words. Rather they contain a very penetrating insight into some of the difficulties which beset the most abstract view of existence. The same difficulties have been felt by other philosophers; thus, in the *Parmenides* of Plato, great obstacles have been set forth to considering existence either as One or as Many. And Kant represents it as one of the antinomies of the reason, that the world can neither be conceived of as without a beginning, nor as having had a beginning. No blame can possibly attach to Gorgias for

<sup>37</sup> Καὶ ὅτι μὲν οὐκ ἔστι, συνθεῖς τὰ ἐτέροις εἰρημένα, ὅσοι περὶ τῶν ὄντων λέγοντες, τάναντία, ὡς δοκοῦσιν, ἀποφαίνονται αὐτοῖς· οἱ μὲν, ὅτι ἓν καὶ οὐ

πολλά· οἱ δὲ αὖ, ὅτι πολλὰ καὶ οὐχ ἓν· καὶ οἱ μὲν ὅτι ἀγέννητα οἱ δὲ ὡς γενόμενα ἐπιδεικνύσας, ταῦτα συλλογίζεται κατ' ἀμφοτέρων, Arist. *De Xen.* &c.

these speculations, nor for the conclusions to which they led. Plato himself, in the *Parmenides* (p. 135), urges and exhorts the young philosopher to follow out this sort of dialectic. 'You should exercise yourself while yet young,' says Parmenides to Socrates, 'in that which the world calls waste of time (τῆς δοκούσης ἀχρήστου εἶναι καὶ καλουμένης ὑπὸ τῶν πολλῶν ἀδολεσχίας), else truth will escape you.' What, then, is this method? It consists in the following out of contrary hypotheses, the one and the many, the like and the unlike, motion, rest, creation, destruction; not only supposing the existence of each of these separate ideas, but afterwards also their non-existence; follow out the consequences in each case, and see what comes of the antinomy. All praise, then, is due to Gorgias, from Plato's point of view, for his stringent dialectic. To the popular mind, such reasonings appear absurd or repugnant. But the philosopher is only stimulated by them to seek for a higher ground of vision, whence these seeming contradictions and difficulties may be seen to be reconciled. We can only regret that we do not possess the entire work of Gorgias, in order to know more accurately its exact purpose; whether his arguments were meant to have a universal validity, or whether they were only relative to the Ionic and Eleatic philosophies. The latter would seem to be actually the case, whatever was meant by the author himself; for the destructive arguments of Gorgias, while they are of force against previous philosophy, do not touch the universe of Plato, in which there was a synthesis of the one and the many, of being and not-being.

The two remaining theses of Gorgias, that being if existent could not be known, and if known could not be communicated,—contain the strongest form of that subjective idealism afterwards repeated by Kant. They place an impassable gulf between things in themselves and the human mind. We can

never know things in themselves, all we know is our thought, and the thought is not the thing. Still less could we communicate them to others, for by what organs could we communicate things in themselves? How by speech could we convey even the visible? In this part of the dialectic of Gorgias, we trace an affinity to the doctrines of Protagoras. They each exhibit a tendency to a disbelief in the possibility of attaining truth. This scepticism, however, does not constitute Sophistry. It was not peculiar to the Sophists, but is a characteristic universally of the close of the Pre-Socratic era of philosophy. Aristotle speaks against it very strongly, but he does not call it Sophistry, he attributes it to several great names (*Metaphys.* III. c. 4—5). After arguing against the saying of Protagoras, he mentions that Democritus said ‘there is no truth, or it is beyond our finding’ (Δημόκριτος γέ φησιν ἥτοι οὐθὲν εἶναι ἀληθὲς ἢ ἡμῖν γ’ ἄδηλον); that Empedocles said ‘thought changes according as men change; that Parmenides said in the same way, ‘thought depends on our physical state;’ that Anaxagoras said ‘things are according as men conceive them.’ Aristotle remarks, ‘It is surely an evil case, if those who have attained truth most, as loving it best, and seeking it most ardently, hold these opinions. It is enough to make one despair of attempting philosophy. It makes the search after truth a mere wild-goose chase. The cause of these opinions is that men, while speculating on existence, have considered the sensible world to be the only real existence. And this latter is full of what is uncertain and merely conditional’ (*Metaphys.* III. v. 15, 16). Sophistry then is not constituted by any theories of cognition or existence. It consists in a certain spirit, in a particular purpose with which philosophy or the pretence of philosophy, is followed. ‘Sophistry and dialectic,’ says Aristotle, ‘are conversant with the same matter as philosophy, but it differs from them both;

from the one in the manner of its procedure, the other in the purpose which guides its life. Dialectic is tentative about those subjects on which philosophy is conclusive, and Sophistry is a pretence, and not a reality.<sup>38</sup>

None of the remaining great Sophists, besides Protagoras and Gorgias, appear to have entered upon metaphysical questions. Sophistry far rather consists in the absence of fixed opinions, than in any tenets whether good or bad. As before said, we shall find that Aristotle always speaks of it as a spirit, a tendency, a trick, and not as a set of doctrines. In one place he speaks of Sophistry as consisting in rhetoric applied with certain aims (*Rhetoric*, I. i. 14). Elsewhere he says it is the near neighbour of dialectic (*Soph. El.* XXXIII. 11) It consists in using wrangling unfair arguments, with a view of astounding the listener,<sup>39</sup> in order that out of this triumph, reputation, and out of reputation, gain may accrue.<sup>40</sup>

The false arguments used for this purpose seem to have become a sort of professional prerogative; so that the Sophistical art, as dramatically represented by Plato, and as analysed and reduced to system by Aristotle, may claim the distinction of having exhausted all the resources of fallacy—of having boldly entered on and utterly explored the possibilities of error in human reasoning. Aristotle says that 'Plato gave no bad definition of Sophistry in making it to be concerned with the non-existent. For the arguments of almost all the Sophists may be said to be concerned with the accidental (*i.e.* that

<sup>38</sup> Περὶ μὲν γὰρ τὸ αὐτὸ γένος στρέφεται ἡ σοφιστικὴ καὶ ἡ διαλεκτικὴ τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ, ἀλλὰ διαφέρει τῆς μὲν τῷ τρόπῳ τῆς δυνάμεως τῆς δὲ τοῦ βίου τῇ προαίρεσει. Ἔστι δὲ ἡ διαλεκτικὴ πειραστικὴ περὶ ὧν ἡ φιλοσοφία γνωριστικὴ, ἡ δὲ σοφιστικὴ φαινομένη, οὕσα δ' οὐ. *Metaphys.* III. ii. 20.

<sup>39</sup> Διὰ τὸ παρὰ δόξα βούλεσθαι ἐλέγχειν, ἵνα δεῖναι ὦσιν ὅταν ἐπιτύχωσιν, *Eth.* VII. ii. 8.

<sup>40</sup> Οἱ μὲν οὖν τῆς νίκης αὐτῆς χάριν τοιοῦτοι ἐριστικοὶ ἄνθρωποι καὶ φιλέριδες δοκοῦσιν εἶναι, οἱ δὲ δόξης χάριν τῆς εἰς χρηματισμὸν σοφιστικοί, *Soph. El.* II. 5.

which has no absolute existence); as, for instance, their question whether Coriscus, the musician, is the same as plain Coriscus; whether by becoming musical, one absolutely comes into being,' &c. (*Metaphys.* v. ii. 4). Plato had said (*Sophist*, p. 59), that 'while the philosopher is ever devoted to the idea of the absolutely existent, and thus lives in a region which is dark from excess of light, the Sophist, on the other hand, takes refuge in the murky region of the non-existent.' This 'non-existent' was, as Aristotle explained it, the sphere of the accidental, the conditional, the relative, as contrasted with absolute being. Elsewhere we find that it was a trick of the Sophists to avail themselves of a traditional piece of dialectic 'older than Protagoras,' and to argue that to speak falsely was impossible, for that would be no less than uttering the non-existent, whereas the non-existent has no existence in any sense whatever, and therefore to conceive or utter it is impossible (*Euthydem.* p. 284—286). Plato maintains against this argument, and against the doctrines of the Eleatics, that in some sense 'not being' has an existence. We see then that to set the relative meaning of a word against its absolute signification, to play off the accidental against the essential, formed a main part of the 'Eristic' art. We might have conceived that Plato's representation of the fallacies employed by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus was mere sport of the fancy, and beyond even an exaggeration of the reality, but Aristotle gravely tells us as a matter of fact, that these tricks were habitually employed by the Sophists.<sup>41</sup> How far this sort of petty success was universally aimed at by them it is hard to say. Even the more eminent among them, Gorgias, Protagoras, Hippias, and Prodicus, can hardly be exonerated.

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<sup>41</sup> *Soph. El.* i. 8. "Ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἔστι ἐφίενται δυνάμει οὕς καλοῦμεν σοφί-  
τι τοιούτων λόγων γένος, καὶ διὰ τοιαύτης στάς, δῆλον.



In spite of the appearance of well-meaning, and a certain dignity of conduct which they exhibit in the dialogues of Plato, yet when we read of the 'boast of Protagoras' (τὸ Πρωταγόρου ἐπάγγελμα), that 'he would make the worse cause the better,' which Aristotle says men were justly indignant at, and when we read of the devices of Gorgias (mentioned above, page 87), and also when we consider the rhetorical turn of these men, their activity of intellect, and their boldness in dealing with grave subjects, combined with their want of philosophical earnestness, we can scarcely doubt that they were liable to resort to parallogisms.

Looking at the Sophists in general, we are certainly justified in considering Eristic, and fallacy growing out of it, to have one of their characteristics. The birth and prevalence of fallacy no doubt gave rise to a sounder logic, which was necessary as a counteraction to the Sophists. Thus, historically, their vicious practice was advantageous, but this cannot be reckoned to them as a merit.

We now come to that which is by far the most important question with regard to the Sophists, namely, what was their influence upon ethical thought? Their influence was very great. We have seen that before the fifth century moral philosophy did not exist in Greece. Socrates is commonly spoken of as the first moral philosopher. He is said to have 'brought down philosophy from heaven.' But as in nature, so in the progress of the human mind, nothing is done 'per saltum.' The thought of Socrates was necessitated by that of the Sophists. Without them as his precursors, as well as his antagonists, his life would lose half its meaning. Socrates did not so much see philosophy wandering in heaven, and bring it down to earth and human interests, but rather he found himself surrounded with a cloud of Sophistry which was covering the whole earth, and he called up a human

philosophy to dispel it. From one point of view Aristophanes uttered a sort of truth when he virtually represented Socrates as the chief of the Sophists. Unspeakably greater, and deeper, and holier, as Socrates is than Gorgias or Protagoras, he has yet something in common with them, he is the leading figure in a new era of conscious morality which they had inaugurated.

The very first characteristic that is predicated of the Sophists by Xenophon, Isocrates, and Plato is, that they 'undertook to teach virtue.' To this rule, however, Gorgias was an exception. Meno, in Plato's dialogue, praises him 'because he was never heard to make any pretence of the kind, but used to ridicule those who made it, — he himself thought that men ought to be made clever in speaking.' Socrates on this asks Meno, 'What, don't you then really think that the Sophists can teach virtue?' to which Meno replies, 'I know not what to say, Socrates, for I feel like most men on this question. Sometimes I think that they can teach it, and sometimes that they cannot.' (*Meno*. p. 95.) A nearer definition of what this 'teaching virtue' meant, is put into the mouth of Protagoras, who boasts (*Plato, Protag.* p. 318) that 'he will not mock those who come to him by teaching them mere specialities against their will, as the other Sophists do, such as dialectic, astronomy, geometry, and music. They shall learn from him nothing except what they came to be taught. His teaching will be, good counsel, both about a man's own affairs, how best to govern his own family, and also about the affairs of the state, how most ably to administer and to speak about state matters.' Socrates says, 'You appear to me to mean the art of Politics, and to undertake to make men good citizens.' 'This is just what I undertake,' says Protagoras. To attempt to discover in this proposal anything insidious or subversive of morality, would

be quite absurd. Protagoras is represented by Plato throughout the dialogue as exhibiting an elevated standard of moral feelings. Thus he repudiates with contempt the doctrine that injustice can ever be good sense (p. 333), and from grounds of cautious morality, he declines to admit that the pleasant is identical with the good (p. 351). There is little reason to doubt that Protagoras may have conveyed to those who sought his instructions much prudent advice, and many shrewd maxims on the conduct of life and on the art of dealing with men in public and private relations. Of the hortatory morality of the Sophist, we have further means of forming a judgment from the celebrated composition (*Σύγγραμμα*) of Prodicus, commonly called 'The Choice of Hercules.' It is preserved for us by Xenophon (*Memorab.* II. i. 21—34), who represents it as being quoted by Socrates with a view of enforcing the advantages of temperance and virtue. It was the most popular of the declamations of Prodicus (*ὅπερ δὲ καὶ πλείστοις ἐπιδείκνυται*), and has since constantly found a place in books of elegant extracts and moral lessons. It would be easy to criticise and find fault with this fable. It does not adequately represent the real trial and difficulty of life. If at the period of transition from boyhood to youth (*ἐπεὶ ἐκ παίδων εἰς ἡβήην ὠρμᾶτο*) one might go forth to a place of retirement (*ἐξελθόντα εἰς ἡσυχίαν καθῆσθαι*), and there see presented Vice and Virtue, the one meretricious in dress and form, the other beautiful, and dignified and noble; and if when Vice had opened her alluring offers, Virtue immediately exposed their hollowness, substituting her own far higher and greater promises of good; and if there and then, one might choose *once for all* between the two, who is there that would hesitate a moment to accept the guidance of Virtue? It may be said almost universally that all youths aspire after what is good. If it depended on a choice made once for all at the opening of life,

all men would be virtuous. But man's moral life consists in a struggle in detail; and this the figure of Prodicus fails to represent. But the same criticism might be applied to other allegories. We all feel that if Christian life were literally the same as the *Pilgrim's Progress*, many more would follow it. Several parts of the exhortation which Prodicus puts into the mouth of Virtue are full of merit; a noble perseverance and manliness of character are inculcated; and in the denunciation of vice the following fine sentence occurs, 'You never hear that which is the sweetest sound of all, self-approbation; and that which is the fairest of all sights you never see, a good deed done by yourself!' There is something rather rhetorical in the complexion of this discourse, even as it is given by the Socrates of Xenophon, and he concludes it by saying, 'Prodicus dressed up his thoughts in far more splendid language than I have used at present.' But against the moral orthodoxy of the piece, not a word can be said, and we may safely assert, that had all the discourses of the Sophists been of this character, they would not have fallen into such general bad repute as teachers.

Plato never represents the Sophists as teaching lax morality to their disciples. He does not make sophistry to consist in the holding wicked opinions; on the contrary, he represents it as only too orthodox in general, but capable occasionally of giving utterance to immoral paradoxes for the sake of vanity. Sophistry rather tampers and trifles with the moral convictions than directly attacks them. It is easy to see how this came about. Greece was now full of men professing to 'teach virtue.' They were ingenious, accomplished, rivals to each other, above all things desirous of attracting attention. Their talk was on a trite subject, on which it was necessary to say something new. The procedure of the Sophists was twofold, either it was rhetorical or dialectical. They either (1) tricked

out the praises of justice and virtue with citations from the old poets, with ornaments of language, and with allegories and personifications. Of this latter kind of discourse we have a specimen in the 'Choice of Hercules,' and again we have the sketch or skeleton of a moral declamation which Hippias, in Plato's dialogue (*Hipp. Major*, p. 286), says he has delivered with great success, and is about to deliver again. The framework is simple enough. Neoptolemus, after the fall of Troy, is supposed to have asked Nestor's advice for his future conduct. Nestor replies by suggesting many noble maxims. "'Tis a fine piece,' says Hippias complacently, 'well arranged, especially in the matter of the language.' Such like compositions of the Sophists form a sort of parallel to the moral or religious novel of the present day. Or else (2) they gave an idea of their own power and subtlety, by skirmishes of language, by opening up new points of view with regard to common every-day duties, and making the old notions appear strangely inverted. All the while that they thus argued, no doubt they professed to be maintaining a mere logomachy. But to an intellectual people like the Greeks, there would be something irresistibly fascinating in this new mental exertation. Aristophanes represents the conservative abhorrence which this new spirit awakened. He depicts in a caricature, (which must be regarded as a marvellous production when we consider that it was written in his twenty-first year,) a new kind of education in which everything is sophisticated, that is, tampered with by the intellect. A sort of casuistry must have been fostered throughout Greece by various concurrent causes; by the drama, which represented, as for instance in the *Antigone*, a conflict of opposing duties; by the law-courts, in which it was constantly endeavoured, to 'make the worse side seem the better;' and lastly, as we have seen, by the Sophists, who in discoursing on the duties of the citizen, did not refrain from

showing that there was a point of view from which 'the law' appeared a mere convention, while 'natural right' might be distinguished from it.

To be able to view a conception from opposite points of sight; to see the unsatisfactoriness of common notions; to feel the difficulties which attach to all grave questions—these are the first stages preparatory to obtaining a wise, settled, and philosophical conviction. Thus far the dialectic of the Sophists and of Socrates coincide. But the Sophists went no further than these first steps; the positive side of their teaching consisted in returning to the common views for the sake of expediency. That there is danger incurred by the dialectical process, in its first negative and destructive stages, no one has felt more strongly than Plato. He wishes, in his *Republic*, that dialectic, as a part of education, may be deferred till after thirty, because 'so much mischief attaches to it,' because 'it is infected with lawlessness.' 'As a supposititious child having grown up to youth, reverencing those whom he thought to be his parents, when he finds out he is no child of theirs, ceases his respect for them and gives himself up to his riotous companions; so is it with the young mind under the influence of dialectic. There are certain dogmas relating to what is just and right, in which we have been brought up from childhood—obeying and reverencing them. Other opinions recommending pleasure and license we resist, out of respect for the old hereditary maxims. Well then, a question comes before a man; he is asked what is the right? He gives some such answer as he has been taught, but is straightway refuted. He tries again and is again refuted. And when this has happened pretty often, he is reduced to the opinion, that nothing is more right than wrong; and in the same way it happens about the just and the good and all that he before held in reverence. On this, naturally enough, he abandons his alle-

giance to the old principles and takes up with those that he before resisted, and so from a good citizen he becomes lawless' (*Repub.* pp. 537-538.) It is obvious that the process of dialectic here described, consists in nothing more than starting the difficulties, in other words, stating the question of morals. Plato does not here attribute antinomian conclusions to the teachers of dialectic; he speaks of the disciple himself drawing these, from a sort of impatience, having become dissatisfied with his old moral ideas, and not waiting to substitute deeper ones.

Throughout his dialogue Plato does not attribute lax or paradoxical sentiments to the greater Sophists; he puts these in the mouths of their pupils, such as Callicles, the pupil of Gorgias, or of the inferior and less dignified Sophists, as Thrasymachus. Sophistry consists for the most part in outward conformity, with a scepticism at the core, hence it tends to break out and result occasionally in paradoxical morality, which it is far from holding consistently as a system. We shall have quite failed to appreciate the true nature of Sophistry, if we miss perceiving that the most sophistical thing about it is its chameleon-like character. One of the most celebrated 'points of view' of the Sophists, was the opposition between nature and convention. Aristotle speaks of this opposition in a way which represents it to have been in use among them merely as a mode of arguing, not as a definite opinion about morals. He says (*Soph. El.* XII. 6), 'The topic most in vogue for reducing your adversary to admit paradoxes, is that which Callicles is described in the *Gorgias* as making use of, and which was a universal mode of arguing with the ancients,—namely, the opposition of 'nature' and 'convention;' for these are maintained to be contraries, and thus justice is right according to convention, but not according to nature. Hence they say, when a man is speaking with reference

to nature, you should meet him with conventional considerations; when he means 'conventionally,' you should twist round the point of view to 'naturally.' In both ways you make him utter paradoxes. Now by 'naturally' they meant the true, by 'conventionally' what seems true to the many.' Who was the first author of this opposition is uncertain. Turning from the Sophists to the philosophers, we find the saying attributed to Archelaus (Diog. Laert. II. 16), 'That the just and the base exist not by nature, but by convention.'<sup>43</sup> This Archelaus was the last of the Ionic philosophers, said to be the disciple of Anaxagoras and the master of Socrates. 'He was called the Physical Philosopher,' says Diogenes, 'because Physics ended with him, Socrates having introduced Ethics. But he, too, seems to have handled Ethics. For he philosophized on laws, and on the right and the just; and Socrates succeeding him, because he carried out these investigations, got the credit of having started them.' About the same period Democritus is recorded to have held that, 'The institutions of society are human creations, while the void and the atoms exist by nature.'<sup>44</sup> He also said, that the perceptions of sweet and bitter, warm and cold, were νόμῳ, that is, what we should call 'subjective.' These reflections indicate the first dawn of Ethics. They show that philosophy has now come to recognise a new sphere; beyond and distinct from the eternal laws of being, there is the phenomenon of human society, with its ideas and institutions. The first glance at these sees in them only the variable as contrasted with the permanent, mere convention as opposed to nature. Ethics at its outset by no means commences with questions about the individual. It separates 'society' from

<sup>43</sup> Καὶ τὸ δίκαιον εἶναι καὶ τὸ αἰσ-  
χρὸν οὐ φύσει, ἀλλὰ νόμῳ.

<sup>44</sup> Ποιητὰ δὲ νόμῳ εἶναι. Φύσει δὲ  
ἄτομα καὶ κενόν, Diog. Laert. IX. 45.



'nature,' as its first distinction. This was because in Greece the man was so much merged into the citizen; even Aristotle says, the state is prior to the individual; the individual has no meaning except as a member of the state. It is a subsequent step to separate the individual from society: first sophistically, for the sake of introducing an arbitrary theory of morals; at last, philosophically, to show that right is only valid when acknowledged by the individual consciousness, but at the same time that the broad distinctions of right and wrong are more objective and permanent than anything else, more absolutely to be believed in than even the logic of the intellect.

Looking at the Sophists rather as the promulgators than as the inventors of this opposition between φύσις and νόμος, we see they applied it (as in the person of Callicles, their pupil, in the *Gorgias*, pp. 483-484) to support crude, paradoxical, and anti-social doctrines; to maintain that nature's right is might, while society's right (which is unnatural, and forced upon us for the benefit of the weak) is justice and obedience to the laws. It is a carrying out of exactly the same point of view, to say, as Thrasymachus is made to do in the *Republic* of Plato (p. 338), that justice is 'the advantage of the stronger.' This position is there treated as a mere piece of 'Eristic.' It is met by arguments that are themselves partly captious and sophistical. The real difficulty which lies at the root of the question, is immediately restated in the second Book of the *Republic*, and the answer to it forms the subject of the entire work. Another ethical topic with which the Sophists would be sure to deal, was the question, What is the chief good? We have before observed that this was a leading idea in the early stages of Grecian morals. In the discourses of the Sophists various accounts would be given of the matter. Sometimes, as in the fable of Prodicus, happiness, or the chief good, would be represented as inseparable from

virtue; at other times a rash and unscrupulous Sophist, like Polus, in the *Gorgias* of Plato (p. 471), would be found to assert that the most enviable lot consists in arbitrary power, like that of a tyrant, to follow all one's passions and inclinations. This assertion of arbitrary freedom for the individual, though, of course, not consistently maintained by the Sophists, was yet one of the characteristics of their era.

Let us now briefly sum up the conclusions to which we have been led regarding this celebrated set of men; the influence they produced upon thought; and their relation to moral science. We have seen how the word 'Sophist' had at first a merely general import, signifying artist, or philosopher. We have seen how it came to be applied in a restricted sense to the members of a particular profession, the itinerant 'teachers of virtue,' in Greece, and how, from the bad repute into which these teachers fell, the word was now applied with a certain amount of reproach. Especially this was the case with the adjective formed from this word; and lastly, the characteristics of the Sophists and their procedure was summed up in one word 'Sophistic,' which was denounced both by Plato and by Aristotle, as being a spirit utterly antagonistic to philosophy and sound thinking. In asking further in what did this 'Sophistic' consist, we found that it by no means implied directly immoral tenets, or an intention to corrupt the world. It consisted (1) in the making a craft or profession of philosophy; (2) hence truth was not its aim, but reputation or emolument; (3) hence it was rhetorical, covering with words the poverty of its thoughts; (4) or else Eristical, using the artifices of dialectic to raise difficulties, or to maintain paradoxes. In the relation of the Sophists to society in general, the question has been raised, Did they impair the morality of Greece? The answer must be a mixed one. Owing to the influence of the Sophists, and also to other causes, thought

was less simple in Greece at the end of the fifth century than it had been at the beginning. Between the age of Pisistratus and that of Alcibiades, the fruit of the tree of knowledge had been tasted. Man had passed from an unconscious into a conscious era. All that double-sidedness with regard to questions, which is found throughout the pages of Thucydides, and which could not possibly have been written a hundred years before, is a specimen of the results of the Sophistical era. The age had now become probably both better and worse. It was capable of greater good and of greater evil. A character like that of Socrates is far nobler than any that a simple stage of society is capable of producing. The political decline of the Grecian states alone prevented the full development of what must be regarded as a higher civilization. The era of the Sophists then must be looked upon as a transition period in thought—as a necessary, though in itself, unhappy step in the progress of the human mind. The subjective side of knowledge and thought was now opened. Philosophy fell into abeyance for awhile, under the scepticism of Protagoras and Gorgias, but only to found a new method in Socrates and Plato. Ethics had never yet existed as a science. Popular moralizing and obedience to their laws, was all the Greeks had attained to. But now discussions on virtue, on the laws, on justice, on happiness, were heard in every corner; at times rhetorical declamation; and at times subtle difficulties or paradoxical theories. If physical philosophy begins in wonder, Ethics may be said to have begun in scepticism. The dialectical overthrow of popular moral notions, begun by the Sophists and characteristic of their times, merged into the deeper philosophy and constructive method of Socrates.

III. The personality of Socrates (to whom we now turn) has perhaps made a stronger impression upon the world than that of any other of the ancients, and yet as soon as we wish to

inquire accurately about him, we find something that is indeterminate and difficult to appreciate about his doctrines. Socrates having contributed the greatest impulse that has ever been known to philosophy, was himself immediately absorbed in the spreading circles of the schools which he had caused. Cynic, Cyrenaic, and Platonic doctrines stand out, each more definitely in themselves than the philosophy of Socrates. The causes of this are obvious, for the fact that he wrote no philosophical treatises gave rise to a twofold set of results. (1) On the one hand, his philosophy being in the form of conversations with all comers, restricted itself for the most part to a method—to a way of dealing with questions—to an insight into the difficulties of a subject—to a conception of what was attainable, and what ought to be sought for in knowledge. It was therefore free from dogmatism, but also wanting in systematic result. Taking even the conversations of Socrates as they are given by Xenophon, we can find in them certain inconsistencies of view. (2) From the absence of any actual works of Socrates, we are left to the accounts of others. And here we are met with the well-known discrepancy between the pictures drawn of him by his different followers, a discrepancy which can never be reconciled nor exactly estimated. We can never know exactly how far Xenophon has told us too little, and Plato too much.

However, by a cautious and inductive mode of examination we may succeed in establishing a few points at all events about Socrates, and in discerning where the doubt lies about others. There seems to be no reason whatever against receiving in their integrity the graphic personal traits which Plato has recorded of his master. The description of him which is put into the mouth of Alcibiades at the end of the *Symposium*, seems to have in view the exhibition, in the concrete, of those highest philosophic qualities which had before been exhibited

in the abstract. Plato does not shrink from portraying the living irony which there was in the appearance of Socrates, his strange and grotesque exterior covering, like the images of Silenus, a figure of pure gold within. Other peculiarities of the man have a still deeper significance, being more essentially connected with his mental qualities. Not only did he excite attention by a robustness and versatility of constitution which could bear all extremes, but also by another still more strange idiosyncrasy; he seems to have been liable to fall into fits of abstraction, almost amounting to trances. During the siege of Potidæa, while on service in the Athenian camp, he is recorded to have stood fixed in one attitude a whole night through, and when the sun rose to have roused himself and saluted it, and so returned to his tent. It has been observed that the peculiar nervous constitution which could give rise to this tendency, and which seems to have an affinity to the clairvoyance of Swedenborg and others among the moderns, was probably connected with that which Socrates felt to be unusual in himself, that which he called τὸ δαμόνιον, 'the supernatural,' an instinctive power of presentiment which warned and deterred him from certain actions, apparently both by considerations of personal well-being, and the probable issue of things, and also by moral intuitions as to right and wrong. This 'supernatural' element in Socrates (which he seems to have believed to have been shared, in exceedingly rare instances, by others) cannot be resolved into the voice of conscience, nor reason, nor into the association of a strong religious feeling with moral and rational intuitions, nor again into anything merely physical and mesmeric, but it was probably a combination, in greater or less degrees, of all. There are other parts of the personal character of Socrates which are also parts of his philosophical method; for his was no mere abstract system, that could be conveyed in a book,

but a living play of sense and reason; the philosopher could not be separated from the man. Of this Xenophon gives us no idea. But in Plato's representation of the irony of Socrates we have surely not only a dramatic and imaginative creation, but rather a marvellous reproduction (perhaps artistically enhanced) of the actual truth. To this Aristotle bears witness, in stating as a simple fact that 'Irony often consists in disclaiming qualities that are held in esteem, and this sort of thing Socrates used to do' (*Eth.* iv. vii. 14). The irony of Socrates, like any other living characteristic of a man, presents many aspects from which it may be viewed. It has (1) a relative significance, being used to encounter, and tacitly to rebuke, rash speaking, and every kind of presumption. It was thus relative to a Sophistical and Rhetorical period, but has also a universal adaptability under similar circumstances. (2) It indicates a certain moral attitude as being suitable to philosophy, showing that in weakness there is strength. (3) It is a part of good-breeding, which by deference holds its own. (4) It is a point of style, a means of avoiding dogmatism. (5) It is an artifice of controversy, inducing an adversary to expose his weakness, maintaining a negative and critical position. (6) It is full of humour; and this humour consists in an intellectual way of dealing with things, in a contrast between the conscious strength of the wise man and the humility of his pretensions, in a teacher coming to be taught, and the learner *naïvely* undertaking to teach. Such are some of the most striking features in the mien and bearing of Socrates, not only one of the wisest, but also one of the strangest beings that the world has ever seen; who moved about among men that knew him not. One man alone, Plato, knew him and has handed down to us the idea of his life. When now we come to his doctrines, Plato, as is acknowledged, ceases to be a trustworthy guide. The sublime developments of philosophy made by the

disciple, are with a sort of pious reverence put into the mouth of the master. We are driven then to criticism, in order to assign to Socrates, as far as possible in their naked form, his own attainments.

The statements of Aristotle would seem to furnish a basis for an estimate of the Socratic doctrine; but even these cannot be received without a scrutiny, for Aristotle was so imbued with the writings of Plato, that he seems at times to regard the conversations depicted in them as something that actually had taken place. He speaks of the Platonic Socrates as of an actual person. A remarkable instance of this occurs in his *Politics* (II. vi. 5), where, having criticized the *Republic* of Plato, he proceeds to criticize the *Laws* also, and says, 'Now, all the discourses of Socrates exhibit genius, grace, originality, and depth of research; but to be always right is, perhaps, more than can be expected.'<sup>44</sup> 'The discourses of Socrates' here stand for the dialogues of Plato, which is the more peculiar in the present case, since in the *Laws* of Plato, the dialogue under discussion, Socrates does not appear at all as an interlocutor. In other places, however, we may judge from Aristotle's manner of speaking, that he refers to the real Socrates, and not to the Socrates of literature. The most important passages of this kind are where he draws a distinction between Socrates and Plato, and states their relation to each other; cf. *Metaphys.* I. vi. 2, XII. iv. 3-5. The second of these passages contains a repetition and an expansion of the former; it may, therefore, be quoted alone. Aristotle is relating the history of the doctrine of Ideas. He tells us how it sprung from a belief in the Heraclitean principle of the flux of sensible things, and the necessity of some other and permanent

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<sup>44</sup> Τὸ μὲν οὖν περιττὸν ἔχουσι πάντες | τὸ καινοτόμον καὶ τὸ ζητητικόν, καλῶς  
οἱ Σωκράτους λόγοι καὶ τὸ κομψὸν καὶ | δὲ πάντα ἴσως χαλεπόν.

existences, if thought and knowledge were to be considered possible. He proceeds, that Socrates now entered on the discussion of the ethical virtues, and was the first to attempt a universal definition of them—definition, except in the immature essays of Democritus and the Pythagoreans, having had no existence previously. ‘Socrates was quite right in seeking a definite, determinate conception of these virtues (εὐλόγως ἐζητεῖ τὸ τί ἐστίν), for his object was to obtain a demonstrative reasoning (συλλογίζεσθαι), and such reasonings must commence with a determinate conception. The force of dialectic did not yet exist, by means of which even without a determinate conception (χωρὶς τοῦ τί ἐστι), it is possible to consider contraries, and to inquire whether or not there be the same science of things contrary to one another. There are two things that we may fairly attribute to Socrates, his inductive discourses (τούς τ’ ἐπακτικοὺς λόγους) and his universal definitions. These universals, however, Socrates did not make transcendental and self-existent (χωριστά), no more did he his definitions. But the Platonists made them transcendental, and then called such existences Ideas.’

This interesting passage assigns to Socrates, first his subjects of enquiry, namely, the ethical virtues; second, his philosophical method, which was to fix a determinate conception or universal definition of these, by means of inductive discourses, by an appeal to experience and analogy. His definition was an immense advance on anything which had gone before, and yet it fell far short of the Platonic point of view. The reasoning of Socrates was demonstrative or syllogistic, and therefore one-sided. His conceptions were definitely fixed so as to exclude one another. He knew nothing of that higher dialectic, which setting aside the first limited and fixed conception of a thing, from which the contrary of that thing is wholly excluded, asks, Is there not the



same science of things contrary to each other? Is not a thing inseparable from, and in a way identical with, its contrary? Is not the one also many, and the many, one? In another point also the conceptions formed by Socrates differed from the Ideas of Plato—that they had no absolute existence, they had no world of their own apart from the world of time and space. We see, then, the gulf which is set by this account of Aristotle's between the historic Socrates and the Socrates of Plato. The historic Socrates was quite excluded from that sphere of contemplation on which the Platonic philosopher enters (*Repub.* p. 510), where all hypotheses and all sensible objects are left out of sight, and the mind deals with pure Ideas alone. According to Aristotle, Socrates had not attained to the higher dialectic which Plato attributes to him. No doubt, however, Plato discerned in the method which Socrates employed in his conversations,—in his inquiring spirit, in his effort to connect a variety of phenomena with some general law, in his habit of testing this law by appeals to fresh experience and phenomena,—hints and indications of a philosophy which could rise above mere empirical generalizations. The method was not so much to be changed as carried further, it need only pass on in the same direction out of subordinate into higher genera.

Aristotle always says about Socrates that he confined himself to ethical inquiries.<sup>45</sup> This entirely coincides with the saying of Xenophon, that 'he never ceased discussing human affairs, asking, What is piety? what is impiety? what is the noble? what the base? what is the just? what the unjust? what is temperance? what is madness? what is a state? what constitutes the character of a citizen? what is rule over man? what makes one able to rule?' (*Memor.* i. i.

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<sup>45</sup> Περὶ μὲν τὰ ἠθικὰ πραγματευομένου, περὶ δὲ τῆς ὀλης φύσεως οὐθέν, *Met.* i. vi. 2.

16.) In all this we see the foundation of moral philosophy as a science, and hence Socrates is always called the first moral philosopher. But we have already remarked (see above, p. 107) that the way was prepared for Socrates by Archelaus, by the Sophists, and by the entire tendencies of the age. There is another saying about Socrates which is a still greater departure from the exact historical truth, namely, that he divided science into Ethics, Physics, and Logic. It is quite a chronological error to attribute to him this distinct view of the divisions of science. He never separated his method of reasoning from his matter, nor could he ever have made the method of reasoning into a separate science. In Plato even, Logic has no separate existence; there is only a dialectic which is really metaphysics. And we may go further, and say that in Aristotle Logic has no one name, and does not form a division of philosophy. Again, Socrates probably never used the word Ethics to designate his favourite study. If he had used any distinctive term, he would have said Politics. With regard to Ethics also, we may affirm that in Plato they are not as yet a separate science, and in Aristotle only becoming so. As to Physics, Socrates appears rather to have denied their possibility, than to have established their existence as a branch of philosophy. The above-mentioned division is probably not older than the Stoics.

Pursuing our negative and eliminatory process with regard to the position of Socrates in the history of thought, we may next ask what was his hold upon that tenet which in Plato's dialogues appears not only closely connected with his moral and philosophical views in general, but also is made to assume the most striking historical significance in connection with his submission to the sentence of death—his belief in the immortality of the soul. It seems clearly established, both by the direct testimony of Xenophon and also by the indirect and dramatic

intimations of Plato, that Socrates might, if he had chosen, have avoided being condemned to death; but that, on the contrary, he deliberately accepted and even courted a capital sentence. His end, thus tragical and heroic as it has always appeared, must be regarded as little else than a judicial suicide. When we examine such an act simply and apart from all considerations of its affecting concomitant circumstances and its theatrical splendour, when we look at it entirely from a moral point of view as a question of right and wrong—it then becomes a wonder that all ages should have joined in praising it not merely as relatively noble, but as something absolutely right and even holy in its character. Beyond a doubt this circumstance must be attributed to the beauty of the picture which Plato has left us of the last days of Socrates. In that picture all motives are purified and softened; our attention is drawn from that which was in reality a contumacious self-assertion, and is made to rest on the serene calmness of the sage in his last hours, during which sublime visions of the future life occupy his thoughts and his tongue. If now we turn from this representation to the account furnished by Xenophon of some of the last conversations of Socrates, we cannot help being conscious of a different effect produced on our minds. We now have rather harshly obtruded on us the calculation made by Socrates of the personal advantages he was to attain by dying, and among these the blessings of a future life are not reckoned; there is no mention of anything that would indicate belief in immortality.

In Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and *Apologia Socratis* (the genuineness of which has been doubted, but it bears strong internal marks of being genuine), Socrates is asked whether he has prepared his defence. He answers that 'His whole life has been a preparation, for he has never acted unjustly.'

It is possible that this answer might have had a double meaning, on the one hand a literal meaning—that his conduct was the best answer to his accusers; on the other hand a religious meaning—that his life had been a *preparatio mortis*; but Xenophon appears only to have understood the saying in the former and literal sense. When reminded that the judges have often condemned those that were really innocent, Socrates replies that he has twice been stopped by the supernatural sign when thinking of composing a defence—that God seems to intimate to him that it was best for him to die—that if he is condemned he will meet with an easy mode of death—at a time when his faculties are still entire—whereas, if he were to live longer, only old age and infirmities and loss of his powers would await him—that he knows good men and bad are differently estimated by posterity after their deaths—and that he leaves his own cause in the hands of posterity, being confident they will give a right verdict between him and his judges. The only sentence recorded by Xenophon (besides the one above-mentioned) that admits the possibility of being referred to a future life, is where Socrates is mentioned to have said in reference to Anytus, ‘What a worthless fellow is this, who seems not to know that whichever of us has done best and most profitably for all time (*εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον*), he is the winner.’ In this saying, Plato might have discovered a reference to immortality, but Xenophon takes it to mean merely ‘the long run,’ applying it to the bad way in which the son of Anytus afterwards turned out. If we separate from the speeches recorded by Xenophon the allusion which Socrates makes to his ‘supernatural sign,’ which shows a sort of belief in a religious sanction to the course he was taking;—the rest resolves itself into a very enlightened calculation and balance of gain against loss in submitting to die. The *Phædo* of Plato has

elevated this feeling into something holy; it puts out of sight those parts of the calculation which consisted in a desire to escape from the pains of age by a painless death, and in a regard to the opinion of posterity; and it makes prominent and all-absorbing the desire for that condition on which the soul is to enter after death. Were it not for Plato, we should have had an entirely different impression of the death of Socrates, an entirely different kind of sublimity would have been attached to it. Instead of the almost Christian enthusiasm and faith which we are accustomed to associate with it, we should only have known of a Stoical resignation and firmness,—an act indeed which contains in itself historically the germ of Stoicism. The narrative of Xenophon no doubt misses something which Plato could appreciate, but it at all events enables us to understand how both the Cynic and Cyrenaic morality sprang from the teaching and life of Socrates. Anything approaching to suicide, however suitable to the point of view of the Cynics and Stoics, must always seem reprehensible in comparison with the greater moral sacrifice (it may be) and the paramount duty of living out one's life.

One more point is worth notice in the *Apology* of Socrates, as it is given by Xenophon. It is the way he answers the charge of corrupting youth. Having protested against the notion of his teaching vice to any, when Melitus further urges, 'Why, I have known those whom you have persuaded not to obey their parents;' Socrates replies, 'Yes, about education, for this is a subject they know that I have studied. About health people obey the doctor and not their parents; in state affairs and war you choose as your leaders those that are skilled in these matters; is it not absurd, then, if there is free trade in other things, that in the most important interest of all, education, I should not be allowed to have the

credit of being better skilled than other men?' The fallacy of this reasoning is obvious, for had Socrates claimed to be chosen 'Minister of Education' by the same persons who voted for the Archons and the Generals, or had he succeeded in persuading the Fathers that he was the best possible teacher for their sons, nothing could have been said against it. But the complaint against him was that he constituted youths, who were unfit to judge, the judges of their own education, and thus inverted all the natural ideas of family life. One can well understand the invidiousness which would be encountered by one undertaking such a position and defending it in the words recorded by Xenophon. Viewing this attitude of Socrates merely from the outside, one can justify, in a manner, the caricature of it drawn by Aristophanes. We see from this point of view how Socrates was a Sophist, and must have exhibited a merely Sophistical appearance to many of his contemporaries. But from another point of view, looking at the internal character and motives of the man, his purity, and nobility of mind, his love of truth, his enthusiasm (*schwärmerei* as the Germans would call it), his obedience to some mysterious and irresistible impulse, and his genius akin to madness,—we must call him the born antagonist and utter antipodes of all Sophistry. There is an opposition and a contradiction of terms in all great teachers. While they are the best men of their times, they seem to many wicked, and the corrupters of youth. The flexibility and ardour of youth make the young the most ready disciples of a new and elevated doctrine. But this goes against the principle that the children should honour the parents. Hence a great teacher sets the 'children against the fathers;' and the higher morality which he expounds, being freer and more independent of positive laws; being more based on what is right in itself, and on the individual consciousness and apprehension

of that right,—tends also in weaker natures to assume the form of licence. This is one application of the truth, that new wine cannot safely be put into old bottles.

The positive results that are known to us of the ethical philosophy of Socrates, are of course but few. Aristotle's allusions restrict themselves virtually to one point—namely, the theory that 'Virtue is a science.' This doctrine is mentioned in its most general form, *Eth.* VI. xiii. 3. Its application to courage is mentioned, *Eth.* III. viii. 6—that Socrates said courage was a science. And the corollary of the doctrine, that incontinence is impossible, for it is impossible to know what is best and not do it—is stated, *Eth.* VII. ii. 1. These allusions agree equally with the representations of Plato and of Xenophon, we may therefore treat them as historical. It remains to ask what was the occasion, the meaning, and the importance of this saying that 'Virtue is a science.' The thought of Socrates was so far from being an abstract theory, it was so intimately connected with life and reality, that we are enabled to conceive how this proposition grew up in his mind, as a result of his age and circumstances. (1) It was connected with a sense of the importance of education. This feeling was no doubt caused in part by the procedure of the Sophists, which had turned the attention of all to general cultivation, and especially to ethical instruction. The question began now to be mooted, whether virtue—*e.g.*, courage, could be taught? (cf. Xen. *Memor.* III. ix. 1.) Socrates appears on this question to have taken entirely the side of the advocates of education. The difficulties which are shown to attach to the subject in the *Meno* of Plato, we may consider to be a later development of thought, subsequent even in the mind of Plato to the *Protagoras*, *Laches*, &c. We may specify three different stages of opinion as to the question, Can virtue be taught. The Sophists said 'Yes,' from an over confidence of pretensions, and from

not realizing the question with sufficient depth. Socrates said 'Yes,' giving a new meaning to the assertion; wishing to make action into a kind of art, to make self-knowledge and wisdom predominate over every part of life. Plato said, 'No,' from a feeling of the deep and spiritual character of the moral impulses. He said 'Virtue seems almost to be an inspiration from heaven sent to those who are destined to receive it.'<sup>46</sup> Aristotle, taking again the human side, would say 'Yes,' implying, however, that the formation of habits was an essential part of teaching, and allowing also for some differences in the natural disposition of men. (2) This doctrine was connected with the inductive and generalizing spirit of Socrates, it was an attempt to bring the various virtues, which Gorgias used to enumerate separately (cf. Plato, *Meno*, p. 71, Aristot. *Politics*, I. xiii. 10), under one universal law. Thus the four cardinal virtues, justice, temperance, courage, and wisdom, he reduced all to wisdom. (3) The doctrine had two sides. It on the one hand contained implicitly the theory of 'habits,' but was at the same time a sort of empiricism. 'Courage consists in being accustomed to danger.' (This is the expression of the doctrine given, Xen. *Memorab.* III. ix. 2, and Aristot. *Eth.* III. viii. 6.) On the other hand, it implied rather self-knowledge, and a consciousness of a law; which is quite above all mere acquaintance with particulars. This is drawn out in the *Laches*, where courage is shown to consist in the knowledge of good and evil; and in the *Republic* it is described as that highest kind of presence of mind, which maintains a hold of right principles even amidst danger. (4) We have said that Socrates wished to make action into a kind of art. It seems to have been a favourite analogy with him to remark that the various craftsmen studied systematically their own

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<sup>46</sup> *Θεὸς μολοῖ παραγυρομένη δυνε νοῦ, οἷς δὲ παραγίγνεται, Meno. p. 99.*



crafts; but that Politics, (which would include the direction of individual life), was not so learned. Out of this analogy, no doubt, sprang the further conclusion that human life must have its own proper function (*ἔργον*, cf. *Repub.* p. 353). Virtue then, according to the point of view of Socrates, became the science of living. So expressed, the doctrine easily takes a utilitarian and somewhat selfish turn; as, indeed, it does in the *Protagoras*, where virtue is made the science of the good, but 'the good' is identified with pleasure. Under this aspect the doctrine presents an affinity to Benthamism, and also to the practical views of Goethe, and at the same time enables us to understand how it was possible for the Cyrenaic philosophy to spring out of the school of Socrates. (5) It lays the foundation for conscious morality, by placing the grounds of right and wrong in the individual reason. It forms the contradiction to the Sophistical saying, 'justice is a convention' (*νόμος*), by asserting that 'justice is a science,' that is, something, not depending on society and external authority, but existing in and for the mind of the individual. Aristotle said that nothing could be better than this—if only Socrates, instead of identifying virtue with the rational consciousness, had said it must coincide with the rational consciousness; in other words, had he not ignored all distinction between the reason and the will.

This defect in the definition of Socrates exhibits one of the characteristics of early Ethics, namely, that they contain extremely little psychology. At first men are content with the rudest and most elementary mental distinctions; afterwards greater refinements are introduced. Plato's threefold division of the mind into Desire, Anger, and Reason, was the first scientific attempt of the kind. But even in Plato, the distinction between the moral and the intellectual sides of our nature was hardly established. Partly we shall see that this was a merit, and consciously admitted in order to elevate action

into philosophy ; partly, it was a defect proceeding from the want of a more definite psychology. Socrates identified the Will with the Reason. We can understand this better, if we remember that the practical question of his day always was, not, What is Right? but, What is Good? Socrates argued that every one would act in accordance with their answer to this question ; that they could not help doing what they conceived to be good. Hence incontinence was impossible. The argument, however, is a fallacy because it leaves out of sight the ambiguity of the word good. Good is either means or end. All men wish for the good as an end ; that is, good as a whole, as a universal. All wish for happiness and a good life. But good as a means does not always recommend itself. The necessary particular steps appear irksome or repulsive. Hence, as it is said, *Eth.* VII. iii. 5, a distinction must be drawn with regard to this phrase 'knowing the good.' In one sense a man may know it, in another not. Undoubtedly, if a perfectly clear intellectual conviction of the goodness of the end, and of the necessity of the means, is present to a man, he cannot act otherwise than right.

There was another paradox connected with the primary doctrine of Socrates. It was that injustice, if voluntary, is better than if involuntary. This startling proposition appears to gainsay all the instincts of the understanding, and its contradictory is assumed in the *Ethics* (VI. v. 7). But it is stated by Socrates, and supported by arguments (*Xen. Memorab.* IV. ii. 20), and it is again maintained dialectically, though confessed to be a paradox, in Plato's dialogue called the *Hippias Minor*. The key to the paradox is to be found in this, that the proposition asserts, that *if it were possible* to act with injustice voluntarily, this would be better than if the same act were done involuntarily. But by hypothesis it is impossible for a man really to do wrong knowingly. It would

be a contradiction in terms, since wrong is nothing else than ignorance. Therefore the wise man can only do what is seemingly wrong. His acts are justified to himself and are really right. The effect of this proposition is to enforce the principle that wisdom and knowledge are the first things, and action the second. The same is expressed in the *Republic* of Plato (p. 382), where it is asserted that the purest and most unmixed lie is not where the mind knows what is true and the tongue says what is false, but where the mind thinks what is false. *Mutatis mutandis*, we might compare these tendencies in the Socratic teaching, to the elevation of Faith over Works in theological controversy.

The dialectical difficulties of morality characteristic of the Sophistical era, appear from Xenophon's account to have frequently occupied the attention of Socrates. Thus Aristippus is recorded to have assailed him with the question whether he knew anything good. Whatever he might specify, it would have been easy to show that this was, from some points of view, an evil. Socrates, being aware of the difficulty, evaded the question by declining to answer it directly. He said, 'Do you ask if I know anything good for a fever? or for the ophthalmia? or for hunger? For if you ask me if I know any good, that is good for nothing, I neither know it, nor wish to know it' (Xen. *Memorab.* III. viii. 3). This answer implies the relative character of the term good. The puzzle of Aristippus was meant to consist in playing off the relative against the absolute import of 'good.' Other subtleties Socrates is mentioned to have urged himself, as for instance in the conversation with Euthydemus (*Memorab.* IV. 2) whose intellectual pride he wished to humble, he shows that all the acts (such as deceiving, lying, &c.) which are first specified as acts of injustice, can in particular cases appear to be just. In fact, the unsatisfactoriness of the common conceptions of

justice is suggested here just as it is in the *Republic* of Plato. It is probable that the historic Socrates would really have advanced in the argument on justice as far as the conclusion of the first book of the *Republic*. For the development of the later theory he perhaps furnished hints and indications which Plato understood and seized, and buried in his mind. Thence by degrees they grew up into something far different from what Socrates had consciously attained to. The dialectic of Socrates had an element in common with that of the Sophists, namely, it disturbed the popular conceptions on moral subjects. It had this different from them, and which constituted its claim to be not merely a destructive, but also a constructive method—it always implied (1) that there was a higher and truer conception to be discovered by thought and research; (2) it seized upon some permanent and universal ideas amidst the mass of what was fluctuating and relative; (3) it left the impression that the most really moral view must after all be the true one.

The many-sided life of Socrates gave an impulse, as is well known, to a variety of schools of philosophy. It is usual to divide these into the imperfect and the perfect Socraticists; the Megarians, who represented only the dialectic element in Socrates, and the Cynics and Cyrenaics, who represented each a different phase of his ethical tradition, being considered as the imperfect Socraticists; and Plato being esteemed the full representative and natural development of all sides of his master's thought. Plato is so near to Aristotle, and is such a world in himself, that we may well leave his ethical system in its relation to Aristotle for separate consideration. An account of the Megarian school belongs rather to the history of Metaphysics, the Cynics and Cyrenaics then alone remain to be treated of in the present part of our sketch of the pre-Aristotelian morals.

The Cynical and Cyrenaic philosophies were each, as has been remarked, rather a mode of life than an abstract theory or system. But as every system may be regarded as the development into actuality of some hitherto latent possibility of the intellect, so these modes of life may be regarded each as the natural development of a peculiar direction of the feelings. Nor do they fail to reproduce themselves. That attitude of mind which was exhibited first by Antisthenes and Diogenes, has since been over and over again exhibited, with superficial differences, and in various modifications by different individuals. And many a man has essentially in the bias of his mind been a follower of Aristippus. Each of these schools was an exaggeration of a peculiar aspect of the life of Socrates. If we abstract all the Platonic picture of the urbanity, the happy humour, and at the same time the sublime thought of Socrates, and think only of the barefooted old man, indefatigably disputing in the open streets, and setting himself against society, we recognise in him the first of the Cynics. Again, if we think of him to whom all circumstances seemed indifferent, who spoke of virtue as the science of the conduct of life, and seemed at times to identify pleasure with the good, we can understand how Aristippus, the follower of Socrates, was also founder of the Cyrenaic sect. Several points these two opposite schools seem to have had in common. (1) They started from a common principle, namely, the assertion of the individual consciousness and will, as being above all outward convention and custom, free and self-responsible. (2) They agreed in disregarding all the sciences, which was a mistaken carrying out of the intentions of Socrates. (3) They stood equally aloof from society, from the cares and duties of a citizen. (4) They seem both to have upheld the ideal of a wise man, as being the exponent of universal reason, and the only standard of right and wrong. This ideal was no doubt a shadow of the

personality of Socrates. We find a sort of adaptation of it by Aristotle in his *Ethics* (II. vi. 15), where he makes the *φρόνιμον* to be the criterion of all virtue. The same conception was afterwards taken up and carried out to exaggeration by the Roman Stoics.

Cynicism implies sneering and snarling at the ways and institutions of society; it implies discerning the unreality of the shows of the world, and angrily despising them; it implies a sort of embittered wisdom, as if the follies of mankind were an insult to itself.

We may ask, How far did the procedure of the early Cynics justify this implication? On the whole, very much. The anecdotes of Antisthenes and Diogenes generally describe them as being true 'Cynics,' in the modern sense of the word. Their whole life was a protest against society; they lived in the open air; they slept in the porticos of temples; they begged; Diogenes was sold as a slave. They despised the feelings of patriotism: war and its glory they held in repugnance; 'Thus freed,' says M. Renouvier, 'from all the bonds of ancient society, isolated, and masters of themselves, they lived immovable, and almost divinized in their own pride.' Their hard and ascetic life set them above all wants. 'I would rather be mad,' said Antisthenes, 'than enjoy pleasure.' They broke through the distinction of ranks by associating with slaves. And yet under this self-abasement was greater pride than that against which they protested. Socrates is reported to have said, 'I see the pride of Antisthenes through the holes in his mantle.' And when Diogenes exclaimed, while soiling with his feet the carpet of Plato, 'Thus I tread on Plato's pride,' 'Yes,' said Plato, 'with greater pride of your own.' The Cynics aimed at a sort of impeccability; they were equally to be above error and above the force of circumstances. To the infirmities of age, and even to death

itself, they thought themselves superior; following the example of Socrates, they resorted to a voluntary death when they felt weakness coming on, and such an act they regarded as the last supreme effort of virtue. As their political theory, they appear to have maintained a doctrine of communism. This seems to have been extended even to a community of wives,—a point of interest, as throwing light upon the origin of Plato's ideal *Republic*. Such notions may really have been to some extent entertained by Socrates himself. At all events we find them in one branch of his school. A life like that of the ancient Cynics presents to us a mournful picture, for we cannot but deplore the waste of so much force of will, and that individuals should be so self-tormenting. The Cynic lives by antagonism; unless seen and noticed to be eccentric, what he does has no meaning. He can never hope to found an extended school, though he may be joined in his protest by a few disappointed spirits. In the Cynical philosophy there was little that was positive, there was no actual contribution to Ethical science. But the whole Cynical tone which proclaimed the value of action and the importance of the individual Will, was an indication of the practical and moral direction which thought had now taken, and prepared the way for the partial discussion of the problems of the Will in Aristotle, and for their more full consideration among the Stoics. Crates, the disciple of Diogenes, was the master of Zeno.

Personally, the Cyrenaics were not nearly so interesting as the Cynics. Their position was not to protest against the world, but rather to sit loose upon the world. Aristippus, who passed part of his time at the court of Dionysius, and who lived throughout a gay, serene, and refined life, avowed openly that he resided in a foreign land to avoid the irksomeness of mixing in the politics of his native city, Cyrene. But the Cyrenaic philosophy was much more of a system than the

Cynic. Like the *Ethics* of Aristotle, this system started with the question, What is happiness? only it gave a different answer. Aristotle probably alludes to the philosophy of Aristippus, amongst others, in saying (*Eth.* i. viii. 6), 'Some think happiness to consist in pleasure.' But it has been observed that he chooses not Aristippus, but Eudoxus, as the representative of the doctrine formally announced, that 'pleasure is the Chief Good' (*Eth.* i. xii. 5, x. ii. 1). This points to the fact that Aristippus did not himself entirely systematize his thoughts. He imparted them to his daughter Arete, by whom they were handed down to her son, the younger Aristippus (hence called *μητροδιδάκτορς*), and in his hands the doctrines appear first to have been reduced to scientific form. If then we briefly specify the leading characteristics of the Cyrenaic system, as it is recorded by Diogenes Laertius, Sextus Empiricus, &c., it must be remembered that this is the after growth of the system. But though we cannot tell to what perfection Aristippus himself had brought his doctrines, there are many traces of their influence in the *Ethics* of Aristotle.

Cyrenaic morals begin with the principle, taken from Socrates, that happiness must be man's aim. Next they start a question, which is never exactly started in Aristotle, and which remains an unexplained point in his system, namely, 'What is the relation of the parts to the whole, of each successive moment to our entire life?' The Cyrenaics answered decisively, 'We have only to do with the present. Pleasure is *μονόχρονος*,<sup>47</sup> *μερική*, an isolated moment, of this alone we have consciousness. Happiness is the sum of a number of these moments. We must exclude desire and hope and fear,

<sup>47</sup> Here we trace something similar to the doctrine of Aristotle, that 'Pleasure is like a monad, or a point,

complete in itself, perfect without relation to time' (*Eth.* x. iv. 4.).



which partake of the nature of pain, and confine ourselves to the pleasure of the present moment.

In this theory it must be confessed that there is considerable affinity to Aristotle's doctrine of the *τέλος*; and some have thought that Aristotle alludes to Aristippus (*Eth.* x. vi. 3-8), where he argues that amusement cannot be considered a *τέλος* (cf. *Politics* viii. v. 13). In short, the *τέλος* of Aristotle is only distinguished from the *μονόχρονος ἡδονή* of Aristippus, by the moral earnestness which characterizes it. The Cyrenaics further asking, What is pleasure? answered by making three states of the soul possible; one, a violent motion, or tempest, which is pain; another, a dead calm, which is the painless, or unconscious state; the third, a gentle, equable motion, which is pleasure. Pleasure was no negative state, but a motion. This doctrine seems to be alluded to in the *Philebus* of Plato (p. 53),<sup>48</sup> where Socrates, in arguing against the claims of pleasure to be the chief good, returns thanks to a certain refined set of gentlemen for supplying him with an argument, namely, their own definition of pleasure, that it is not a permanent state (*οὐσία*), but a state of progress (*γένεσις*). It is generally thought that the Cyrenaic school are here meant. In the *Ethics* of Aristotle (vii. xii. 3), there appears to be another allusion to this same definition, in a way which, without some explanation, it is excessively hard to understand. Aristotle (or Eudemus), in discussing pleasure, says, Some argue that pleasure cannot be a good, because it is a state of becoming (*γένεσις*). He afterwards denies that pleasure is a *γένεσις*, except in certain cases. And then he proceeds to explain how it was that pleasure came to be called a *γένεσις*.

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<sup>48</sup> Ἄρα περὶ ἡδονῆς οὐκ ἀκηκόαμεν | τινες αὐτοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἐπιχειροῦσι  
ὥς δὲ γένεσις ἔστιν, οὐσία δὲ οὐκ ἔστι | μὴνύειν ἡμῖν, οἷς δεῖ χάρειν ἔχειν.  
τὸ παράπαν ἡδονῆς; κομψοὶ γὰρ δὴ

He says<sup>49</sup> 'it was from a confusion between the terms γένεσις and ἐνέργεια,—it was thought to be a γένεσις, because essentially a good, to express which the term ἐνέργεια would have been appropriate.' At first sight it appears a strange contradiction to say pleasure is thought not to be a good, because it is a γένεσις; it is thought to be a γένεσις, because it is a good. The explanation is, that the two clauses do not refer to the same set of opinions. The former part refers to the Platonists, who argued, as in the *Philebus*, against pleasure, because it was not a permanent state; the latter part refers to the definition of the Cyrenaics, that pleasure is a state of motion, or, as it is here called, a γένεσις. It is obvious that the Cyrenaic definition of pleasure, as far as we are aware of it, will not bear a comparison, as a scientific account, with the theory of Aristotle. Aristippus appears to have made the senses the only criterion of pleasure, and pleasure, again, the measure of actions. All actions in themselves indifferent, were good or bad according to their results, as tending or not tending to pleasure. The Cyrenaics, however, adapting themselves to circumstances, allowed that their wise man would always maintain an outward decorum in obedience to established law and custom.

The selfishness of this system at once condemns it in our eyes. For even acts of generosity and affection, according to such a system, though admitted by it to be excellent, are excellent only on this account because, by a reflex power, they occasion pleasure to the doer. What in other systems is only concomitant to good acts, is here made the primary motive, by which all morality is debased. The maintainers of such a philosophy are, perhaps, half-conscious to themselves that it

<sup>49</sup> *Eth.* VII. xii. 3. Δοκεῖ δὲ γένεσις ἐνέργειαν γένεσιν ὁλοῦναι εἶναι, ἔστι δ' τις εἶναι, ὅτι κυρίως ἀγαθόν τὴν γὰρ ἔρεον.

never can be generally applicable, that they are maintaining a paradox. Looked into closely, this is seen to be a philosophy of despair. Those who cannot put themselves into harmony with the world, who cannot find a sphere for any noble efforts, nor peace in any round of duties, who have no ties and no objects, may easily, like Horace, 'slip back into the doctrines of Aristippus.' The profound joylessness which there is at the core of the Cyrenaic system, showed itself openly in the doctrines of Hegesias, the principal successor of Aristippus. Hegesias, regarding happiness as impossible, reduced the highest good for man to a sort of apathy; thus, at the extremest point, coinciding again with the Cynics. It is instructive to see the various points of view that it is possible to take with regard to life. In the Cyrenaic system we find a bold, logical following out of a particular view. In this respect the system is remarkable, for it is the first of its kind. The Sophists had trifled with such views, and not followed them out. In the prominence given to the subject of pleasure, in the Ethical systems both of Plato and Aristotle, we may trace the effects of the Cyrenaic impulse.

## ESSAY III.

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### *On the Relation of Aristotle's Ethics to Plato and the Platonists.*

WE have already traced in outline the characteristics of moral philosophy in Greece down to the death of Socrates, and have made brief mention of two of the schools of 'one-sided Socraticists,' as they have been called, the Cynics and Cyrenaics. It remains to resume the thread of the progress of ethical thought in Plato, compared with whom all previous philosophers sink into insignificance. In him all antecedent and contemporary Greek speculation is summed up and takes its start afresh. Especially in relation to any part of the system of Aristotle, a knowledge of Plato is of overpowering importance. To explain the relation of any one of Aristotle's treatises to Plato is almost a sufficient account of all that it contains. If one were asked what books will throw most light upon the *Ethics* of Aristotle, the answer must be undoubtedly, 'the dialogues of Plato.'

Plato as successor to Socrates exhibits a gradual development of philosophy. To trace this progress with any certainty is perhaps impossible, but perhaps the following account may be a sufficient approximation to the truth for our present purpose. At first we have purely Socratic dialogues, as the *Charmides* and *Laches*, the *Euthyphro* and the *Lysis*, &c. These exhibit only a negative dialectic. They show the insufficiency of popular views and the difficulties of the question; they suggest the Socratic doctrine that virtue is knowledge, but leave the problems without a dogmatic

settlement. With these we may rank the *Hippias Minor*, which contains in a wavering form the Socratic paradox, that to do injustice voluntarily, would be better than doing it involuntarily. To this group of dialogues there now succeeds another, which is still negative and destructive. Such are those in which Socrates is placed into collision with the Sophists, e.g. the *Hippias Major*, the *Euthydemus*, the *Protagoras*, and *Gorgias*; these are the most wonderful imaginative and dramatic creations, they contain a picture of all that is most living in the method of Socrates, and they show that the Sophistic point of view is quite as antagonistic to philosophy as the merely popular point of view. After this group there comes a transition period in the *Meno*, where Plato, seeing the limitations to the system of Socrates, and the weaknesses inherent in it, takes the first step to break away into a deeper and broader sphere of thought. This first step consists in seeing the difficulty about virtue and knowledge being taught. How can knowledge be acquired? In the *Meno* the answer is, that knowledge is 'remembered,' not imparted from without. This leads the way to the doctrine of Ideas, but as yet they are not matured. Another group of dialogues represents the growth of Plato's mind under the influence, it is said, of the Megarian school of thought. In this the Ideas come forth, but as yet sparingly, and in a dry, logical, and abstract manner, e.g. in the *Parmenides*, the *Theætetus*, the *Sophist*, &c. The last element that has to be added before the Platonism of Plato is complete, is a Pythagorean influence, a tendency to delight in numbers as a symbol of the absolute, and to entertain the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. This period of Plato's mind we see illustrated in the *Phædrus*, the *Republic*, and the *Timæus*. In the *Republic* we have the full perfection of Plato's philosophy; in it all the different elements are balanced against one another—negative

and constructive dialectic; the manner and method of the historic Socrates, and again of a transcendental Platonic philosopher; the refutation of popular and of Sophistic views; Megarian and Pythagorean influences; a deep morality and a metaphysic that almost denies the existence of the material world; and above all, and springing out of all these elements, we have here the doctrine of Ideas in its most deeply speculative, and at the same time its most imaginative, vivid, and many-sided aspect.

As Socrates discoursed on nothing but moral subjects, so we find that the dialogues of Plato, with very few exceptions, start each with the discussion of some moral question. But the morality of Plato culminates in the *Republic*. Let us then briefly examine some of the distinctive features of this moral system, viewed as an advance upon Socrates. We have already seen (p. 127) that in all probability the Socrates of real life would not have progressed farther in the argument of the *Republic* than the conclusion of Book I., except, indeed, that he might have gone on to define justice as 'a science.' The constructive portion of the dialogue, beginning with the foundation of a state, is probably all a development made by Plato on the beginning of his master. Here then is the first characteristic of the Ethics of Plato, namely, the principle, that ethical conceptions cannot be isolated and considered separately. All things stand in relation to one another. You must take the mind as a whole, or rather society as a whole, before you can judge of any of its parts. Now here we have not only a great advance upon the method of Socrates, who, as Aristotle said (see above, p. 115), always sought a definite conception of each moral term by itself; but also we notice a reaction against what may be called the individualizing principle in the doctrine of Socrates. This individualizing principle, which expressed itself in the saying 'virtue is knowledge'

(see above, p. 124), and which pervaded the whole independent life and thought of Socrates, was full of merit as a protest against that blind obedience, which saw no other ground for morality than the dictates of the law. But it was liable to abuse, and it ran out into an obvious extreme in both the Cynic and the Cyrenaic schools. It contained in itself the germ of the dissolution of society. The whole system of the *Republic* of Plato contains the strongest possible reaction against this principle. Not only does it avoid to contemplate the individual asserting himself against society, but it, so to speak, absolutely annihilates the individual. Lest there should be any trace at all of *imperium in imperio*, even family life is swept away. An individual is debarred from what seem the first rights of individuality; the holding of his own property; the possession of his own wife; and the direction of his own faculties of mind and body. How far this unsparing system of communism was meant for a practical reality, it is hard to say; we may at all events affirm that Plato meant to imply that the state must be an organized whole, like one mind and body, with parts harmoniously adjusted and readily working together, and all under the direction of a supremely wise philosophical consciousness—else there is no scope for virtues in the state, and it is only by conceiving of them in the state that we can learn to conceive of them in the individual.

Besides this appearance of a widely constructive system, including in its view all human relations and institutions—which Plato substituted for the isolated moral inquiries of Socrates, he also made another advance beyond his master by the metaphysical and the religious aspect which he gave to his Ethico-political doctrine. The knowledge of the Idea of good he makes essential as a guiding principle for the legislator, and the belief in a future life, and in a state of rewards and punishments, he considers a necessary complement to the

theory of justice. One other development due to Plato, makes moral science for the first time appear something like what we in modern times have been accustomed to conceive it, and that is, Plato made morals in some slight degree psychological. His account of the cardinal virtues is based on a psychological division of human nature, into Desire, Anger, and Intellect. These principal traits of what morality had become in his hands, may now best be estimated by comparing and contrasting with them the *Ethics* of Aristotle. The *Ethics* of Aristotle were composed between fourteen and twenty-seven years after the death of Plato. If Plato could have come to life again and seen them, he would have been surprised in the first place at a complete terminology and set of formulæ in which for the most part they are expressed, which had been created or developed since his own day; he would have been astonished at the growth of philosophy. In the second place he would have found a different point of view from his own upon many leading questions, and he might have complained here and there of a somewhat captious antagonism. But he must have recognized, perhaps with pride, indications in almost every page of the work, of the lasting influence produced by his twenty years' intercourse, and by his literary productions, on his most distinguished pupil, now become the greatest thinker of the world.

In order to see at one glance how great was the debt of Aristotle to Plato, let us place together and briefly indicate those parts of the moral system of Aristotle which were inherited from his master. These were, (1) His conception of the science as a whole, that Politics was the science of human happiness. (2) His conception of the practical chief good, that it is *τέλειον* and *αὐταρκες*, and incapable of improvement or addition. (3) That man has an *ἔργον*, or proper function; that man's *ἀρετή* perfects this, and that his well-being is



inseparable from it. (4) The psychology of Plato, as a basis for moral distinctions. (5) The practical conclusion of Ethics, that philosophy is the highest good and the greatest happiness, being an approach to the nature of the Divine Being. (6) The doctrine of *Μεσότης*, which is only a modification of Plato's *Μετρίότης*. (7) The doctrine of *φρόνησις*, which is an adaptation, with alterations, of a Socratico-Platonic view. (8) The theory of pleasure, its various kinds, and the transcendency of mental pleasures. (9) The theory of friendship, which seems based on the questions started and not answered in the *Lysis* of Plato. (10) Many a conception, of which mere scattered hints are to be found in Plato, appear here worked out definitely. To this we may add, that the very metaphors in the *Ethics* of Aristotle seem, for the most part, taken from Plato. So great an influence had the one philosopher produced upon the mind and writings of the other, in spite of their wide dissimilarities of nature and tendency. On each of the above heads a few remarks may be made.

(1) Not only is the general point of view—that the individual is inseparable from the state, taken from the *Republic* of Plato, but also the special description of Politics as the science of human happiness, appears unmistakeably borrowed from the *Euthydemus*. It is interesting to compare the conception of Politics, and its relation to the sciences, which is expressed in *Eth.* i. ii. 5-6, with the following description (*Euthydem.* p. 291):—ἐπὶ δὲ δὴ τὴν βασιλικὴν ἔλθοντες τέχνην καὶ διασκοπούμενοι αὐτήν, εἰ αὕτη εἴη ἢ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ἀπεργαζομένη—ἔδοξε γὰρ δὴ ἡμῖν ἢ πολιτικὴ καὶ ἢ βασιλικὴ τέχνη ἢ αὐτὴ εἶναι.—ταύτῃ τῇ τέχνῃ ἢ τε στρατηγικῇ καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι παραδιδόναι ἄρχειν τῶν ἔργων, ὧν αὐταὶ δημιουργοὶ εἰσιν, ὡς μόνῃ ἐπισταμένη χρῆσθαι. σαφῶς μὲν οὖν ἔδοκει ἡμῖν αὕτη εἶναι, ἣν ἐζητοῦμεν, καὶ ἢ αἰτία τοῦ ὀρθῶς πράττειν ἐν τῇ πόλει, καὶ ἀτεχνῶς κατὰ τὸ Αἰσχύλου ἱαμβεῖον μόνῃ ἐν τῇ πρόμῃ

καθῆσθαι τῆς πόλεως, πάντα κυβερνῶσα καὶ πάντων ἀρχουσα πάντα χρήσιμα ποιεῖν. While, however, accepting this conception of Politics, Aristotle does so in a wavering way—he says that his science will be ‘a sort of Politics’ (πολιτικὴ τις, *Eth.* i. ii. 9); and elsewhere he speaks as if it were rather a stretch, to call the science of moral subjects Politics.<sup>1</sup> He treats Ethics in such a way as virtually to separate them from Politics; and in his *Politics*, properly so called, he makes various general references, as we have seen (p. 35), to ‘Ethics,’ as if to a separate science.

(2) In *Eth.* i. vii. 3-6, Aristotle, in laying down his own conception of the chief good, which is to be the ἀρχὴ for Ethics, says that it must be τέλειον and αὐταρκες. These same qualities are attributed to the chief good in the *Philebus* (p. 20), a dialogue to which Aristotle seems often to refer, and from which the present doctrine is probably taken. The words are as follows:—τὴν ἀγαθοῦ μοῖραν πότερον ἀνάγκη τέλειον ἢ μὴ τέλειον εἶναι; πάντων δὴ που τελεώτατον, ὃ Σώκρατες. τί δέ; ἱκανὸν ἀγαθόν; πῶς γὰρ οὐ; κ.τ.λ. It is to be observed, however, that Aristotle analyzes the term τέλειον, and gives it a more philosophical import than Plato had done. Plato probably meant nothing more than ‘the perfect.’ Aristotle analyzes this into ‘that which is never a means,’ ‘that which is in and for itself desirable.’ He accepts also from the *Philebus* another doctrine, which is the corollary of the former, namely, that the chief good is incapable of addition. He directly refers to the *Philebus*, *Eth.* x. ii. 3, saying, ‘Plato used just such an argument as this to prove that pleasure is not the chief good—for that pleasure, with thought added to it, is better than pleasure separately; whereas, if the compound of the two is better, pleasure cannot be the chief

<sup>1</sup> *Rhet.* i. ii. 7. Τῆς περὶ τὰ ἡθὴ πραγματείας ἦν δίκαιόν ἐστι προσαγορεύειν πολιτικὴν.

good; for that which is the absolute chief good cannot be made more desirable by any addition to it. And it is obvious that nothing else can be the chief good, which is made better by the addition of any other absolute good.' The reference is to *Philebus*, pp. 20-22. Aristotle implies the same thing, *Eth.* I. vii. 8., by saying that, 'When we call happiness the most desirable of all things, we can only do so on the proviso that we do not rank it with other goods, and place it in the same scale of comparison with them (μὴ συναριθμουμένην, see notes on this passage in Vol. II.); else we should come to the absurdity of considering it capable of improvement by the addition of other goods to it, which, if we consider it as the ideal good for man, is impossible.'

(3) The whole argument by which, from the analogy of the different trades, of the different animals, and of the separate parts of the body, the existence of an ἔργον or proper function for man is proved (*Eth.* I. vii. 11), comes almost *verbatim* from the *Republic* (p. 352-3); as also does the account of the connexion between the ἀρετή of anything with its proper function, which is given, *Eth.* II. vi. 2. The object selected as an illustration is in each case the same—namely, the eye.<sup>2</sup>

(4) The psychology of Aristotle's *Ethics* is based on that of Plato, but it is also a development of it, and contains one essential difference, in the greater prominence—namely, that is given to the will. This, it is true, is virtual rather than expressed, but it lies at the root of the separation of 'practical virtues,' from philosophy, and from 'excellencies of the reason.' Plato divides the mind into the following elements:—τὸ λογιστικόν, τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, and τὸ θυμοειδές (*Repub.* p. 440). Aristotle gives a more physical account of the internal

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Repub.* p. 353. 'Ἀρ' ἂν ποτε | σωτο μὴ ἔχοντα τὴν αὐτῶν οὐκείαν  
δμματα τὸ αὐτῶν ἔργον καλῶς ἀπεργά- | ἀρετήν; κ.τ.λ.-

principle (see below, Essay V.), and divides the mind into that which possesses reason and that which partakes of reason.<sup>3</sup> This answers at first sight to the division of Plato, since the λόγου μετέχον includes both θυμὸς and ἐπιθυμία. But Aristotle pushes the analysis farther, dividing the reason into practical and speculative (which is a great discrepancy from Plato), and not attributing the same character to θυμὸς as it has in the *Republic*, where it is made to stand for something like the instinct of honour, or the spirited and manly will, which, as Plato says, is generally on the side of the reason in any mental conflict. In Aristotle's discussions upon βούλησις, βούλευσις, &c., we see an attempt to found a psychology of the will, thus supplying what was a deficiency in Plato, but the theory does not appear to be by any means complete.

(5) The burden of all the Platonic dialogues is the same, the excellence of philosophy, and its extreme felicity. Most completely does Aristotle reproduce this feeling when (*Eth.* x. vii.) having, as it were, satisfied the claims of common life by his analysis of the 'practical virtues,' he indulges in his own description of that which is the highest happiness, when he says, 'Philosophy seems to afford wonderful pleasures both in purity and duration' (*Eth.* x. vii. 3), and 'We need not listen to the saying, "Men should think humanly," rather as far as possible one should aspire after what is immortal, and do all things so as to live according to what is highest in oneself' (*Eth.* x. vii. 8). We are reminded generally of the enthusiastic descriptions of philosophy, in the *Republic*, the *Phædo*, and the *Symposium* of Plato. One particular passage of the last-named dialogue, seems probably to have suggested to Aristotle the saying (*Eth.* x. viii. 13), that 'The philosopher will surely be most under the protection of heaven (θεοφι-

<sup>3</sup> Λόγον ἔχον and λόγου μετέχον. *Eth.* i. xiii.

λέστατος), because honouring and cherishing that which is highest and most akin to God—namely, the reason.’

(6) The principle of *Μεσότης*, so prominent in Aristotle’s theory of moral virtue, is a modification of Plato’s principle of *Μετρίότης* or *Συμμετρία*. As, however, the history of the doctrine of *Μεσότης* will form part of the subject of the following essay, no more need at present be said upon it.

(7) Aristotle’s doctrine of *φρόνησις*, as far as we can understand it in the Eudemian exposition, which alone remains to us (see above, p. 40), seems to be partly an adoption and partly a correction of a Socratico-Platonic doctrine of similar import. This doctrine, beginning with the form that ‘Virtue is knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*), or thought (*φρόνησις*),’ and being afterwards developed by Plato into the form that ‘Virtue is, or implies, philosophy,’ is accepted, with two corrections, by Aristotle. He denies the identification of ‘thought’ with virtue, saying instead—virtue must ‘be accompanied by’ thought; and he distinguishes and divides thought or wisdom (*φρόνησις*) from philosophy (*σοφία*). The former of these corrections was directed more against Socrates than against Plato; the latter, we shall see, is an important correction of the system of Plato, one that is connected with differences as to the whole view of Ethics. Plato speaks quite decisively of the necessity of *φρόνησις* to make moral action of any worth. In a celebrated passage of the *Theatetus*, (p. 176), he says, ‘We should strive to fly from the evil of the world; the flight consists in as far as possible being made like to God; and this ‘being made like’ consists in becoming just and holy with thought accompanying’ (*ὁμολωσις δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ὅσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι*). In the *Phædo* (p. 691), he descants upon the worthlessness of moral acts if performed without *φρόνησις*: he says, ‘Such virtue is a mere shadow, and in reality a slavish

quality, with nothing sound or true about it.<sup>4</sup> But a little further on (p. 79) he defines *φρόνησις* to be the contemplation of the absolute.<sup>5</sup> We see then that Plato requires that every act should be accompanied by an absolute consciousness—and this absolute consciousness he does not separate from that which takes place in speculation and philosophy. Aristotle says a moral consciousness must accompany every act, a sort of wisdom which is the centre to all the moral virtues (*Eth.* vi. xiii. 6), but this kind of consciousness is quite distinct from the philosophic reason, it deals with the contingent and not with the absolute.

(8) Of the two treatises on Pleasure contained in the *Ethics* of Aristotle, we may assume (see above, p. 39), that the one which appears in Book VII. is the work of Eudemus. It has then a totally different kind of interest from that in Book X. It illustrates, not so much Aristotle's relation to Plato, as rather the growth of the Peripatetic school. It is in its main outline borrowed from the treatise in Book X., but it also contains some peculiarities belonging to the views of Eudemus, of which the chief are a practical, and at the same time, a materialistic tendency. It is antagonistic to the views of 'some' who argued that no pleasure could be a good, because it is a state of becoming (*γένεσις*). This argument is refuted by Aristotle himself in Book X. Eudemus adds other arguments for the same position, not mentioned in Book X., which he criticizes and overthrows. None of these, however, are to be

<sup>4</sup> Χωριζόμενα δὲ φρονήσεως καὶ ἀλλοτρίως ἀντὶ ἀλλήλων, μὴ σκιαγραφία τις ἢ τοιαύτη ἀρετὴ καὶ τῷ ὄντι ἀνδραποδώδης τε καὶ οὐδὲν ὕγιες οὐδ' ἀληθές ἔχουσα.

<sup>5</sup> Ὅταν δέ γε αὐτὴ (ἡ ψυχὴ) καθ' αὐτὴν σκοπῇ, ἐκείσε ὀχρεῖται εἰς τὸ καθα-

ρόν τε καὶ δεῖ ὅν καὶ ἀθάνατον καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχον, καὶ ὡς συγγενὲς ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ δεῖ μετ' ἐκείνου τε γίγνεται, θανατὸν αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτὴν γέννηται καὶ ἐξ ἧ αὐτῇ—καὶ τοῦτο αὐτῆς τὸ πάθημα φρόνησις κεκληται.

found in the *Philebus*, or any dialogue of Plato. They are, in all probability, to be attributed to the Platonic school. There is a direct mention, in connexion with one of the arguments, of the name of Speusippus (*Eth.* VII. xiii. 1). Turning now to Book X., we find the question as to the nature of pleasure opened by the statement of two extreme views on the subject; one, that of the Cynics—that pleasure was ‘entirely evil’ (κομιδῇ φαῦλον)—the other, that of Eudoxus, that pleasure was the chief good. The first view Aristotle sets aside as having rather a moral and practical, than a speculative, character; and as being, though well-intentioned, at all events an over-statement of the truth. He specifies four arguments of Eudoxus to prove that pleasure is the chief good. (a) All creatures seek it. (b) It is the contrary to pain. (c) It is sought for its own sake. (d) Added to any good, it makes that good better. He then mentions the objections (ἐνστάσεις) made to each of these four, and shows that none of the objections is valid, except that brought against the last of the arguments. He shows from Plato (see above, p. 141), that the fact that pleasure can be added to other goods, *disproves*, instead of proving, its claim to be considered the chief good. Aristotle now mentions other general arguments that have been brought against pleasure—namely, that it is not a quality: that it is indefinite (ἀόριστον); that it is a motion, a becoming, or a replenishment (κίνησις, γένεσις, ἀναπλήρωσις); again, that there are many disgraceful pleasures. He answers all these objections, and having accepted the Platonic position that pleasure is, at all events, not the chief good, he proceeds to give his own theory of its nature, considering it to be, except in certain cases, a good, and analyzing its character more accurately than had hitherto been done. In all this we cannot trace anything like a direct antagonism to the *Philebus* or to any other part of Plato’s works. Far rather, as we shall have an opportunity of seeing more distinctly in the next Essay,

Aristotle, while perfectly coinciding with and accepting Plato's general theory of pleasure, the division of its different kinds, the distinction between bodily pleasures which are preceded by desire and a sense of pain, and the mental pleasures which are free from this; while accepting, that is, the whole theory in its moral and practical bearing, refines and improves upon it as a speculative question, substituting a more accurate and appropriate definition of pleasure than is to be found in Plato.

(9) We cannot doubt that Aristotle's attention was turned to the consideration of the subject of friendship by the importance that Plato attributed to it, and the interesting part which he makes it play in his system. Both the *Lysis* and the *Phædrus* are devoted to the discussion of friendship. In the former dialogue little more is done than starting the question, some of which questions are taken up and re-stated in the beginning of Aristotle's treatise (*Eth.* VIII. i. 6). 'Whether does friendship arise from similarity, or from dissimilarity? Does it consist in sympathy, or in the harmony of opposites?' In the *Phædrus* a passionate and enthusiastic picture of friendship is given, which renders it not distinguishable from love; its connexion with the highest kind of imagination, and with the philosophic spirit is dwelt upon at length. In Aristotle nothing of this kind is to be discovered. The picture is colder, but at the same time more natural and human. In the ninth chapter of Book IX. a fine philosophic account of the true value of friendship is to be found, on which more will be said in the succeeding Essay. The whole of this subject is treated with depth and also with moral earnestness, which renders it one of the most attractive parts of Aristotle's *Ethics*. We see throughout, that on every point of the question, the analysis has been pushed farther than Plato carried it.

(10) It remains now to mention, what any one will be con-



scious of who reads the Platonic dialogues in order to illustrate Aristotle—that scattered through the pages of Plato will be found hints and suggestions afterwards worked out by his successor, and floating conceptions that in Plato have no determinate meaning, but which in the *Ethics* of Aristotle, as well as in his other works, have become, or are becoming, fixed and definite terms. Of course the more broad and general conceptions, such as *τέλος*, *δύναμις*, *τὸ ἐπισημένον*, *τί ἐστι*; and *ποῖον τί*, and a host of other metaphysical and logical formulæ are developments of what is to be found in Plato. But also more special conceptions appear, in germ at least, to have been borrowed. Take, for instance, *ὁρθὸς λόγος* (*Eth.* II. ii. 2); this term, which appears used first in a tentative sort of way in the Aristotelian philosophy, and afterwards more definitely (*Eth.* VI. i. 1) to express the moral standard, occurs here and there in the Platonic pages coupled with *ἐπιστήμη* and other such terms, in an approximation to Aristotle's meaning, but by no means reaching it (see notes on *Eth.* II. ii. 2, in Vol. II.). So also the conception of *παίδεια* to express a general connoisseurship of science, and especially some acquaintance with the logic of science, as it is used *Eth.* I. iii. 4 (on which see the notes in Vol. II.), is to be found in the *Timæus*, p. 53, and in the so-called *Erastæ* of Plato, p. 135.

We have said that the very metaphors in Aristotle seem often to have been inherited. That of the 'bowmen' (*Eth.* I. ii. 2), occurs in *Republic*, p. 519. That of the 'Aristeia for pleasure' (*Eth.* I. ix. 1) comes from the *Philebus*, p. 25. The analogy between the political philosopher and an oculist (*Eth.* I. xiii. 7) is from the *Charmides*, p. 155. The comparison of mental extremes to excesses in gymnastic training (*Eth.* II. ii. 6) occurs in the *Erastæ*, p. 134. The metaphor of 'straightening bent wood' (*Eth.* II. ix. 5) is from the *Protagoras*, p. 325.

The comparison of those who have made their own fortune to poets and mothers, who love their offspring (*Eth.* iv.i. 20, ix. vii. 7), is from the *Republic*, p. 330. This list of examples might doubtless be increased.

We have traced hitherto the close connexion of the *Ethics* of Aristotle in almost all its parts with the system of Plato. We have now to show that this connexion was not only one of succession, inheritance, and development, but also was one of antagonism. Already we have seen that even Aristotle's following of Plato was often tinged with discrepancy. We have now to notice those parts of his *Ethics* which are directly characterized and even prompted by a spirit of difference and of polemic.

The greatest difference between Plato and Aristotle, is that expressed in the sixth Chapter of Book I.—Aristotle's dissent from the theory of the Idea of good. Elsewhere, Aristotle criticizes the Ideas altogether; here, in conformity with his present purpose, he confines himself to the Idea of good. To exactly comprehend and explain Plato's Ideas, has always been a problem. Aristotle tells us they rose from a union between the universal definitions of Socrates, and the Heraclitean doctrine of the fleeting character of all objects of sense. To put this a little more clearly the position is as follows: we desire some permanent and certain knowledge. Let us take some object and try to know it, *e.g.*, 'this man.' Looking closely into it we find at once that, in 'this man,' we are in possession of a conception, made up of two elements, a universal and a particular. 'Man' is universal, 'this' is particular. Now, 'this,' may be infinitely various. It is purely relative, entirely changeable. It baffles all attempts at knowledge. The more we analyze 'this,' the more it escapes us, and comes to actually nothing. What constitutes 'this' man? Particular time and place, particular qualities, such as form,

colour, size, and the like. But time and place, form, colour, and size are all in themselves universals. 'This' man is determined by 'this' time, place, form, &c. But, again, what is 'this time?' The particular element in 'this time,' is equally unknowable and unexpressible with the particular element in 'this man.' Hence Heraclitus said, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιστήμη τῶν αἰσθητῶν. Let us now take the other side, and look at the universal element, 'man.' This is something permanent and stable; this constitutes a unity in the midst of plurality; this the mind can rest in contemplating. We give to this universal element the name of form or idea (εἶδος, ἰδέα), a name borrowed probably from Democritus, who spoke of the 'forms' of things being emanations from things themselves, and constituting our knowledge of the things. And now another step has to be taken; we must throw out all distinction between knowledge and existence. Since things exist for us solely through our knowledge of them, and we cannot conceive them existing at all, except as either for our minds or for some other minds, we must give up entirely that dualism which would suppose two terms standing opposite each other, namely, the object and the mind, and we must speak now of one term alone. Nothing exists except what we know. Knowledge and existence are identical, since, as Protagoras said (only in an altered sense), the mind is 'the measure of all things; of existing things that they exist, of non-existent things that they do not exist.' Taking as established, the identity of knowledge and existence, we may use one term to express this identity, namely, 'truth' (ἀλήθεια), which equally implies reality of existence in things, and the right apprehension of them in the mind.

What is it that possesses truth, or reality? Not particulars, which, as we saw before, are (in so far as they are particulars) unknowable, but the universal, the idea. The universal

element, or idea, may hence be said to be the only real existence, while the particulars have only a sort of illusory, or mock existence; when we look closely into them we find they are mere shadows of reality. Hence, Plato, following out this train of thought, said, by a forcible metaphor, that common persons who fancy the particulars to be real existences, are like men in a dimly-lighted cave, taking the shadows on the wall to be realities. By an equally strong metaphor, which Aristotle speaks of as mere poetry (*Metaphys.* I. ix. 12), Plato called the Ideas archetypes (*παράδειγμα*) of sensible things. In this metaphor several points are expressed. (1) That knowledge is rather prior to experience, than derived from it. Experience is the occasion, and not the cause of knowledge. This Plato expressed by saying, that all our knowledge is 'reminiscence.' Things in the world are constantly reminding us of, and calling up, the reminiscence of the Ideas which we saw in their pure state, before we were born. (2) That the forms of the mind are permanent, while the material universe is fleeting. The mind is always prior to, and greater than the world. This points, as Plato argued in the *Phædo*, to the immortality of the soul. (3) The Eleatics had denied the existence of motion, plurality, change; in short, the whole sensible creation. Plato does not go so far as this; though infinitely less real than the Ideas, he allows that it has some share of reality. Metaphorically, he says, 'it partakes of the Ideas.' The Ideas are archetypes of things; in other words, in the midst of the unknowable, the fleeting, the chaotic, the immoveable—there is law, unity, form, order, symmetry, the permanent, and the absolute, existing not materially, but as ideas, dimly seen by the mind, because it is not pure enough; seen more distinctly, according to the purity and elevation of the mind, and always more or less suggested.

We are now brought to that part of Plato's doctrine where

he spoke of the 'Idea of good.' Of this he says (*Repub.* p. 509), that 'As the sun affords to all visible objects not only the power of being seen, but also growth, increase and nourishment; so is there afforded to all objects of knowledge by the good, not only the being known, but also their very being and existence. The good is not existence, but is above and beyond existence (*ἐπὶ ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας*) in dignity and power.' In the *Philebus* (p. 65), it is said that 'the good cannot be comprehended in one idea alone, but it may be taken in three manifestations; beauty, symmetry, and truth.' We see what a metaphysical world we have now to deal with. It is not the material world immediately, but the world of pure cognitions (*τὰ γινωσκόμενα*), that depend on the good for their existence. Every cognition must have the Idea of good present in it. We cannot conceive anything existing except as being good. Evil, in the shape of disease, crime, pain, &c., Plato, from this point of view, would call the non-existent; it is the negation of existence, the want of existence in some way or other; it is the chaotic, the formless, that which has no universality or absoluteness, that which the mind cannot deal with. The Idea of good in the world of thought Plato compared to the sun in the material world; following out this metaphor, evil would be as the shadows which are the mere negation of light, and yet they are necessary to relieve the light, for were all light, nothing would be visible; and so too evil, as the negation of good, may be said to be necessary to its existence. 'Good,' says Plato, 'is the cause of existence and knowledge.' This opens a sublime conception, on the one hand, of a world in which all things are very good; on the other hand, of a philosophy whose method of the deepest knowledge consists in no mere abstract investigations, nor any mere accumulation of experience, but in apprehending with enthusiasm and joy the all-pervading idea of Good, as it manifests

itself under the three forms of beauty, symmetry, and truth. The Idea of good, Plato would by no means confine to metaphysics, as if it had no application to the other sciences. On the contrary, his great object was to raise morals and Politics above all mere empiricism into philosophy properly so-called. Hence, he says, that 'States will never prosper till philosophers are kings;' again, he says, 'The guardian of the state must know with certainty that which all vaguely seek and aspire after—namely, what is the good' (*Repub.* p. 505-6). The Idea of good then, according to Plato, is to be a principle influencing human action, and necessarily forming a part of any system of Politics or morals worthy of being called so.

With this position Aristotle joins issue. After stating the theory in the following words (*Eth.* I. iv. 3), 'Some have thought that besides all these manifold goods upon earth, there is some other absolute good, which is the cause to all these of their being good;' he proceeds to criticize the tenability of such a conception, and concludes his argument by saying, 'But we may dismiss the Idea at present, for if there is any one good, universal and generic, or transcendental (*χωριστόν*) and absolute, it obviously can neither be realized nor possessed by man, whereas something of this latter kind is what we are inquiring after' (*Eth.* I. vi. 13). He follows up those remarks by saying, that 'Perhaps some may think the knowledge of the idea may be useful as a pattern (*παράδειγμα*) by which to judge of relative good.' Against this he argues that 'There is no trace of the arts making any use of such a conception; the cobbler, the carpenter, the physician, and the general, all pursue their vocations without respect to the absolute good, nor is it easy to see how they could be advantaged by apprehending it.'

This criticism is a direct denial of Plato's point of view. Plato, who had expressed himself utterly dissatisfied with the

empirical and prudential morality of his countrymen, and who wished to raise morality and Politics (which with him was but morality on an extended scale) into something wise, philosophical, and absolute—made certain requisitions for this. He demanded that a full philosophic consciousness should govern everything. He required that a knowledge of the good-in-itself should be present to the mind. He acknowledges, it is true, that the philosopher after dealing with sublime speculations, may seem dazzled and confused when he is suddenly confronted with the petty details of life, the quibbles of law-courts, &c. But on the other hand he seems to have considered, not only that philosophy was indispensable to morality, but also that the mind, by contemplating the Idea of good, would become conformed to it. This Idea, then, was not merely an object for the abstract reason; it was an object for the imagination also, and an attraction for the highest kind of desires. It was not only an idea, but also an ideal. Aristotle, in a clearer and more analytic way, regards the Idea as something out of all relation to action (*οὐ πρακτόν*), as a metaphysical conception simply, if, indeed, it could be entertained at all. He then entirely separates it from Ethics. He considers that the guiding principle (*ἀρχή*) for Ethics must be not this absolute transcendental good, but a practical good, which he envisaged as happiness, or the end for man. These two views must stand for ever apart, and on each side there seems to be some degree of merit and some degree of fault. Fine as is Plato's conception of science, it must be confessed that there is some degree of vagueness about it. We need not put ourselves in the position of Plato's contemporaries, those of whom the story is related that 'They went to him expecting to hear about the chief good for man, but they were disappointed, for he put them off with a quantity of remarks about numbers and things they could not understand.' But even taking

Plato as 'a philosopher for philosophers,' there seems to be something not quite explained in his system. Infinitely rich as he was in invention and suggestion, we might almost say that he required an Aristotle as his successor to give definiteness to his conceptions. When then we turn to Aristotle, we find the power that is gained by a division of the sciences. We find no longer an effort to attain to that highest point of union for all knowledge and all existence which is far above the ordinary ken, and which can hardly be viewed otherwise than by occasional glimpses—but rather, an effort after clearness and completeness, after the arrangement of all experience under appropriate and separate leading conceptions. It is easy to see what an immense field is at once laid open. Rapid indeed, and wonderful were the achievements of a mind like that of Aristotle. But when all is done, one feels also that something has also been lost by this separate treatment of different subjects. One desires again to see Ethics not dis severed from Theology and Metaphysics.

As yet we have only spoken of Aristotle's treatment of the Idea of good in its relation to ethical science, we must now advert to his general treatment of it as a theory. In the first place, we remark that Aristotle gives a very limited and restricted representation of the theory before criticizing it. He does not enter upon, or even mention, that most striking characteristic of the idea of good, which Plato assigns to it, namely, that it is the cause of existence to all objects of cognition, and also the cause of our knowing them. Aristotle merely speaks of it as 'The cause to all other goods of their being good.' He also calls it 'the Universal' (τὸ καθόλου), and inquires in what sense its existence is asserted (πῶς λέγεται). He leaves out then all discussion of that higher and at the same time more difficult part of the theory, which makes the good the central cause of all 'knowing and being;'



he makes the question a drily logical one, as to the nature of universals. What is the meaning of this word good? Is all good one? Is there one absolute conception of good under which you can reduce all separate goods? Is there the same law of good (τὸν τὰγαθοῦ λόγον, *Eth.* I. vi. 11) in all goods properly so called? Else how is the universal name to be accounted for? These are the questions which Aristotle seems to propose to himself. We see how totally different from Plato's is his point of view at starting.

After an expression of respect and good feeling towards the Platonic school, he proceeds directly to bring a series of arguments against the tenability of their doctrine,—and these arguments are briefly as follows:—(1) The Platonists themselves allowed that where there is an essential succession (τὸ πρότερον καὶ τὸ ὕστερον) between any two conceptions, these could not be brought under a common idea. But this succession occurs in different kinds of good. Good in relation, *i.e.* the useful, is essentially later than good in substance, and therefore cannot fall under the same idea. (2) If all good were one, it ought to be predicated under only one category, whereas it can be predicated under all. (3) If it were one, it would be treated of by only one science. (4) The Idea is only a repetition of phenomena, for with these it is really identical. (5) Even the most essential and undoubted goods seem incapable of being reduced to one idea. Every one has felt the unsatisfactoriness of these arguments; they seem captious, verbal, unreal, and not to touch the point at issue. Let us examine them separately. Argument (1) seems to beg the question. It refers to the Platonic doctrine of the ideal numbers (referred to *Metaphys.* XII, vi. 7) which they held to stand in absolute and immutable succession to each other, and to be incapable of being brought themselves under one common Idea. To this Aristotle compares the relation between relative

and absolute goods; he says ~~the one stands in immutable succession to the other; therefore there can be no common idea of them.~~ A Platonist might reply, that this is a mere assumption; that in the case of the ideal numbers, Unity and Duality, for instance, stand in such essential contradistinction to each other, that they are Ideas themselves, and therefore there cannot be Ideas of them. But with regard to the goods, all that is relative in them is merely the particular, the non-existent, which the philosophical reason cannot deal with. It is absurd to make the relativity of the relative good an immutable and permanent quality, which is for ever to distinguish it from the good in itself. (2) The second argument is a mere repetition of the first. Aristotle takes certain categories, namely, substance, quality, quantity, relation, time, and place, &c. (*καὶ ἕτερα τοιαῦτα*), and shows that there are different modes of the good under these different categories. Now, these categories might all be reduced to substance and relation, and then the argument is, 'You have good in substance, and good in different relations, can these be considered the same?' (3) The argument of the sciences is a carrying out of the same objection. Aristotle argues that the sciences point to a still greater subdivision of good. For good, in relation to time, for instance,—that is, opportunity, may be treated of by strategics, or by medicine; and so on with good under the other categories, the sciences still more minutely subdivide it.

Plato might well complain of this subdivision of the sciences being brought as an argument against him, when he had so anxiously urged (*Repub.* p. 531) that in dialectic all sciences united, and dialectic was the science of the idea of good. Even Aristotle had made a union of the practical sciences in Politics (*Eth.* I. ii. 6), and had he contented himself with maintaining here that the *πρακτὸν ἀγαθόν*, the subject of Politics and its subordinate sciences, must always be distinct

from the *νοητὸν ἀγαθόν*, the subject of metaphysics, we must have allowed that such a point of view was fair and admissible. But his present mode of statement makes the argument, both relatively to Plato and also in itself, worthless. When we look back on the whole of these three arguments, it seems almost inconceivable that Aristotle should have believed them to be valid. We can only say with regret, that on some points, this great mind seems to have descended to a sort of smallness. We must also consider that to be able with perfect fairness to represent an antagonist's system, was not commonly the merit of antiquity, certainly it was not always the merit of Aristotle. His accounts of other philosophers, as, for instance, in the first book of the *Metaphysics*, frequently contain something garbled. Again, the direction of his mind was totally different from Plato's; his leaning was predominantly towards experience, and though by no means a mere empiricist or a mere nominalist, yet he was excessively unequal in his views, and sometimes relapses into what seems a merely popular level of thought. To keep his mind at the Platonic point of view would have been to Aristotle a great difficulty, especially for the simple purpose of criticizing Plato. Probably he went with Plato at one period in his youth, then became dissatisfied with parts of the system, with its poetical and enthusiastic character, and with its want of analytic distinctness; then he worked out his own system, which at times bears a close similarity to that of Plato; then, after an interval of perhaps twenty years' alienation, he set himself to refute his master's doctrines; if we picture to ourselves this course, we shall be able in some degree to explain the tone of the arguments used in the present place, and elsewhere where Aristotle attacks the system of ideas.

To resume our examination, the fourth argument is one of which Aristotle seems fond, that the idea (*αὐτοκαστον*) is a

mere repetition of phenomena, exhibiting the same law as the particulars indistinguishable from them, and therefore perfectly useless. This objection is expressed in the *Metaphysics* (i. ix. 1) by saying that 'The Ideas are as if one was unable to count a few things, and thought it would be easier to count them when they were more.' ~~Nothing could be a greater mis-~~statement of Plato's view, for this argument assumes the reality, the substantive and absolute existence of the particulars, and then speaks of the idea or the ~~universal being~~ appended to the end of the row, in order to explain them. ~~Whereas Plato would say the particulars disappear out of sight, on looking into them I find they have no existence, while the universal grows more and more in reality, and absorbs all the attention of the mind. Instead of 'multiplying phenomena,' Plato would say, 'The idea reduces phenomena to unity.'~~ Aristotle's account represents the universal or absolute existence as if it was gained inductively from a set of particulars, and added to the end of them; ~~whereas Plato's account is that the idea is prior to all the particulars; we do not obtain it inductively, we are reminded of it, but we saw it before we were born.~~ Another most captious objection quite unworthy of the gravity of a philosopher, Aristotle here adds, it is that 'Perhaps the idea of good may be said to be distinguished from the number of phenomenal goods by being eternal. But in short, this is no difference, the good is not any more good for this. Length of duration does not constitute a distinction between identical qualities. A white thing is not more white if it lasts long than if it only lasts for a day.' Perhaps this argument need only be stated for its weakness to be seen. Plato would never have consented to this confusion between length of duration (*πολυχρόμιον*) and eternity (*αἰδιον*). It is true, that in popular thinking we picture to ourselves the eternal under the form of duration of

time, but the philosophical conception of the eternal is the necessary (*causa sui*), the absolute, the unconditional, the uncreate and indestructible (*Eth.* vi. iii. 2), that which is out of all relation to time. Aristotle's argument, then, consists in setting the popular way of thinking against the philosophical. He represents the idea to be a copy taken from the particular and made lasting. Whereas Plato meant, that without which we cannot know the particular or conceive it to exist, that which is utterly independent of this or that particular, though the particulars depend on it, that which is independent of yesterday, or to-day, or a thousand years hence.

At this point of the discussion Aristotle seems to have become conscious to himself (*Eth.* i. vi. 8) that the Platonists may complain of his attempting to disprove the unity of good by always setting relative goods in opposition to those that are good in themselves. He proposes then to take certain specimens of things good in themselves, and to make these the test of the theory. The specimens he adduces, are, 'thought, sight, and some pleasures and honours;' he adds that 'If these be not esteemed goods in themselves, nothing else but the pure Idea will remain to be called a good in itself, thus the Idea as a universal or class will lose all its meaning, having no individuals ranked under it.'<sup>6</sup> The question then is, Do these goods, which are sought for their own sake, exhibit the same, or different laws of good? To answer this question would require a very deep and subtle investigation; this Aristotle does not enter upon, but he merely gives a summary assertion that 'The laws exhibited by honour, thought, and pleasure, viewed as goods, are distinct and different from one another.' This appears to be mere dogmatism and a trifling with the question. For we might urge that honour is not properly

<sup>6</sup> "Ἡ οὐδ' ἄλλο οὐδὲν πλὴν τῆς ἰδέας; ὥστε μάταιον ἔσται τὸ εἶδος.

speaking a good sought for its own sake (cf. *Eth.* I. v. 5), and that thought, sight, and pleasure, are all of them ἐνέργειαι and therefore do according to the Aristotelian views exhibit the same law of good.

Aristotle winds up his polemic by assuming as concluded, that there is no realistic unity in the good.<sup>7</sup> He asks, 'What is the account then of this one word good? It cannot surely have arisen from a mere chance coincidence in language. It must be either that all goods proceed from one source or tend to one end—or rather that they are analogous to one another.' He substitutes then arbitrarily without proof or discussion, for he says these belong to metaphysics, a nominalistic theory for the realism of Plato. His view is apparently, that men inductively from a set of similar particulars formed the universal 'good,' and by analogy, where cases were analogous, came to extend the same term to dissimilar particulars. Plato's view was that by experience of a particular there is awakened in the mind the knowledge of a universal, which existed there prior to the particular, and is the law of the existence of that particular, and that by many different particulars we 'are reminded' of this same law or idea, and that hence arises sameness of name<sup>8</sup> by reason of a sameness of law under different relative circumstances and modifications. Realism makes the universal prior to and more real than the particular. Nominalism makes the particulars more real than the universal. Aristotle is by no means consistently a nominalist, though here he avows a sort of nominalism for the time. That he was not prepared with an answer to this question as to the nature of good, that he did not lay it down as the basis of his

Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄρα τὸ ἀγαθὸν κοινόν τι | συνωνύμων τοῖς εἰδεσιν. — Ar. *Meta-*  
κατὰ μίαν ἰδέαν. | *phys.* I. vi. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Κατὰ μέθεξιν εἶναι τὰ πολλὰ τῶν

*Ethics*, is one indication amongst many of the tentative and uncertain method with which he approached the science.

The real difference between the metaphysical point of view of Plato and of Aristotle, and between their respective theories of cognition and existence, it would require a most subtle discussion to set forth, and one which it is quite out of the question at present to attempt. Their moral systems are characterized in general by divergent tendencies; which might be briefly summed up under the names synthetic and analytic. One of the points in regard to which the analytic tendency of Aristotle displays itself, is his departure from Plato's list of the cardinal virtues. In his *Politics*<sup>9</sup> (I. xiii. 10) he approves of the method of Gorgias, in enumerating the virtues in detail, saying that 'People deceive themselves by general definitions, as that virtue consists in a good condition of the soul, or again in straightness of action (*ὀρθοπράγειν*), or some such thing.' And in the same spirit he says (*Eth.* II. vii. 1) that 'While general theories are of wider application (*κοινότεροι*, see the notes on the passage in Vol. II.), those that go into detail have more reality, since action consists in detail,' &c. Accordingly he proceeds to give a list of virtues which contain an exemplification of his principle of *Μεσότης*. This list does not appear formed on any scientific basis, it does not start afresh with any new psychological classification. It seems first to accept, in a way, the list of cardinal virtues, placing courage and temperance in the front of its ranks, reserving justice as being something peculiar, and dividing wisdom into practical and speculative. It then adds to these, different qualities, some of them sufficiently external, which were held in honour among the Greeks. In this procedure there is something which must be called empirical. Aristotle has

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<sup>9</sup> The allusion is to the *Meno* of Plato, p. 71.

two sides, the one speculative and profoundly penetrating and philosophic; the other side tending to the accumulation of details and of experience, regardless of a philosophic point of view, content with a shallow system of classification. His list, when formed, Aristotle seems to have believed in as complete. The same is repeated in the *Rhetoric* (i. ix. 5) with the omission of three here mentioned.

In Aristotle's theory of justice, as far as we can judge of it, there seems to be the same analytical reaction against Plato. Aristotle appears to regard with dislike the attempt to reduce all acts of justice to be manifestations of one general law, harmony, or balance in the mind, so as to make justice, in short, no different from virtue viewed as a whole. He wishes to separate and distinguish from this justice, which is no other than universal right, a distinct quality which shall deal with property alone or all that can be estimated as property. The way in which this subject is treated in the Eudemian book (*Eth.* v.) is very indistinct. Certain principles seem first laid down for the regulation of justice in the state, principles in short of Politics, Jurisprudence, and Political Economy. Then by some remarks on the voluntary and by some casuistical problems, there is an apparent transition to consideration of this quality as existent in the mind of the individual. We cannot think that we have here Aristotle's theory in its entirety, any more than we should have his theory of pleasure if we had only the Eudemian account in Book VII. to rely upon. But the general bearings of the account of justice are discernible, and amongst these is a polemic against Plato. This is perhaps to be traced in the remark that 'It is only by a sort of metaphor you can speak of justice in a man's own self between his higher and lower parts.' (*Eth.* v. ii. 9.)

We have seen already the separation made by Aristotle between Ethics and Metaphysics. The same of course holds



good of Theology, this being with Aristotle but another name for Metaphysics. Practical theology was not a conception that Aristotle could have admitted. His great divergence from Plato on this head may be seen in the fact that while Plato speaks of 'being made like to God, through becoming just and holy, with thought and consciousness of the same' (*loc. cit.*, see above, p. 144), Aristotle, on the contrary, speaks of moral virtue as being totally unworthy of the Gods (*Eth.* x. viii. 7). If we compare Plato and Aristotle as to the tone in which they write, it will appear that Aristotle is on the one hand more human than Plato, this he shows in his respect for the opinions of the multitude. He will not affirm that the dead have no connexion with this life, because it would be 'a hard doctrine and going against opinions too much' (*λίαν ἀφίλον καὶ ταῖς δόξαις ἐναντίον. Eth.* i. xi. 1). He is totally opposed to anything unnatural in life or institutions. And he recognises, with a sort of enthusiasm, the worth of moral virtue,<sup>10</sup> without the incessant demand which Plato made, that this should be accompanied by philosophy. On the other hand, Aristotle is less delicate and reverent than Plato in his mode of speaking of human happiness, especially as attained by the philosopher. In Plato there seems often, if not always, present, a sense of the weakness of the individual as contrasted with the eternal and the divine. If Plato requires philosophy to make morality, he also always infuses morality into philosophy; the philosopher in his pictures does not triumph over the world, but rather is glad to seize on 'some tradition' 'like a stray plank,' to prevent his being lost; he feels that his philosophy on earth is but 'knowing in part.' Aristotle, on the contrary, rather represents the strength than the

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Eth.* i. x. 12. Διαλάμπτει τὸ ἀνδρείος dying for a noble cause.—  
καλόν, said of the good man in mis- III. ix. 4.  
fortune. Cf. also the account of the

weakness of human nature. And in his picture of the happiness of philosophy we cannot but feel that there is over much elation, and something that requires toning down. In the manner of the writing it is obvious that we miss the art, the grace, the rich and delicate imagination of Plato. Above all, we miss the subtle humour which plays round all the moral phenomena. Aristotle does not show any trace of archness. There are sayings in the *Ethics* which might cause a smile, but they are apparently given unconsciously, in illustration of the point in question. In *Eth.* x. v. 8, to show that the different creatures have each their different proper pleasures, Aristotle quotes from Heraclitus the saying that 'An ass likes hay better than gold,' without any sense of anything ludicrous in the illustration. The same thing occurs in one of the Eudemian books (vii. vi. 2), where it is mentioned to illustrate the hereditariness of hot temper, that 'A father being kicked out by his son, begged him to stop at the door, for he said *he* had kicked *his* father as far as that.' This is mentioned with perfect gravity among a list of arguments. Aristotle's rich and manifold knowledge of human nature exhibits itself in his *Ethics*. It might be doubted whether Plato would have written the masterly analytic account of the various virtues in Books III. and IV. These are not living dramatic portraits such as Plato would have made, there is nothing personal or dramatic about them; but they are a wonderful catalogue and analysis of very subtle characteristics.

Before quitting Plato, it may be well to mention two references made to him in the *Ethics* of Aristotle, each for different reasons worth notice. The first occurs *Eth.* i. iv. 5. 'Plato rightly used to doubt and question whether the course were *from* principles or *to* principles, as in the stadium whether from the judges to the goal, or backwards.' There is no passage in the extant dialogues of Plato, corresponding to

this reference. Hence it has been believed that the oral philosophy of Plato is here referred to, and this the use of the imperfect tense would seem to favour. But the metaphor here given is something definite, and probably belonged to Plato himself. This leads then to the conclusion, that Plato in speaking was accustomed to use the same imaginative illustrations, as in his writings. The other reference occurs *Eth.* II. iii. 2. 'One ought to be well trained from youth up.' as Plato says, 'to feel pleasure and pain at the right objects.' The passage alluded to is in the *Laws*, p. 653.<sup>11</sup> It contains a doctrine quite in accordance with Aristotle's own, but, at the same time, at variance with the view maintained in other dialogues of Plato. It gives a dogmatic theory of the inculcation of virtue, of the relation of nature to instruction, and of true education consisting in the learning to feel pleasure and pain aright. This then is a departure from the tentative uncertain attitude of the *Meno*. It is in harmony with the popular point of view, and much in the tone which Aristotle might himself have adopted. The peculiarity is that the genuineness of the dialogue called the *Laws* has been gravely called in question. The reasons for doubting it are (1) The *à priori* improbability of Plato's taking the trouble to compose so long a work, which is to a great degree a repetition of the *Republic*. (2) The inferiority of style. (3) The abandonment of all that is essential in Plato's point of view. Poly-

<sup>11</sup> Λέγω τοίνυν τῶν παίδων παιδικὴν εἶναι πρώτην αἰσθησιν ἡδονὴν καὶ λύπην, καὶ ἐν οἷς ἀρετὴ ψυχῇ καὶ κακία παραγίγνεται, πρῶτον τοῦτ' εἶναι—παιδεῖαν δὴ λέγω τὴν παραγιγνομένην πρῶτον παισὶν ἀρετὴν, ἡδονὴν δὲ καὶ φιλίαν καὶ λύπην καὶ μῖσος ἂν ὁρθῶς ἐν ψυχαῖς ἐγγιγνώσκωνται μήπω δυναμένων λόγῳ λαμβάνειν, λαβόντων δὲ τὸν λόγον συμφωνήσας τῷ λόγῳ,

ὁρθῶς εἰσθῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν προσηκόντων ἐθῶν αὐτῆς θ' ἡ συμφωνία ξύμπασα μὲν ἀρετῇ, τὸ δὲ περὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς καὶ λύπας τετραμμένον αὐτῆς ὁρθῶς, ὥστε μισεῖν μὲν ἂ χρὴ μισεῖν εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς μέχρι τέλους, στέργειν δὲ ἂ χρὴ στέργειν, τοῦτ' αὐτὸ ἀποτεμῶν τῷ λόγῳ καὶ παιδεῖαν προσαγορεύων κατὰ γε τὴν ἐμὴν δόξαν ὁρθῶς ἂν προσαγορεύοις.

theistic theology, and Pythagorean notions are substituted for Plato's doctrine of Ideas. And, as in the place alluded to, a merely practical view of morals seems to be taken. We may ask, does all this denote a change in Plato's mind, or is his name forged, and have his views been garbled by his school?

Perhaps the strongest argument for considering the dialogue to be genuine is, that it is quoted by Aristotle as Plato's; and not only quoted, but also criticized at length in the *Politics* (II. vi.), and compared with the *Republic*. Against this may be set the fact that Aristotle also quotes the *Menexenus*, which is of still more doubtful genuineness. Also, literary criticism was no part of his *metier*. Also, he was absent from Athens during thirteen years after the death of Plato. In the interval the *Laws* must have appeared, for even the testimony of antiquity makes it posthumous. On the whole, perhaps, the balance of probabilities may lead us to consider that the *Laws* stands nearly in the same relation to Plato's *Republic*, as the *Eudemian Ethics* to Aristotle's moral system; that is, that it contains much which is actually Plato's, the whole unskillfully filled up and put together, and the point of view being slightly altered. Partly, then, it may be said to represent a certain degree of change in Plato's mind at the last, and partly also certain tendencies in the Academic school, who seem to have taken a practical direction, and also more and more to have given themselves up to Pythagorean forms of thought.

The chief of these Platonists was Speusippus, nephew to Plato himself, and successor to him in the leadership of the Academy. One of the Pythagoreizing opinions of Speusippus, is alluded to by Aristotle, *Eth.* I. vi. 7. 'The Pythagorean theory on the subject seems more plausible, which places unity in the rank of the goods; to which theory Speusippus, too, seems to have given in his adhesion.' The question

adverted to is, the identity of 'the One' with 'the Good.' The Pythagoreans appear to have placed 'the One' among the various exhibitions of good, whether as causes or manifestations. Among the Platonists, as we are told (*Metaphys.* XIII. x.), there arose a difference, a section of them identifying 'the One' with 'the Good,' the others not considering unity identical with, but an essential element of goodness. They saw that if 'the One' be identified with 'the Good,' it must follow that multitude, or, in other words, matter, must be the principle of evil. To avoid making 'the many' identical with evil, they found themselves forced to abandon the identification of 'the One' with 'the Good.' Of this section Speusippus was leader. He seems to have adopted a Pythagorean formula, saying, that 'the One must be ranked among goods.' Aristotle gives a sort of provisional preference to this theory over the system of Plato. Elsewhere, however (*Metaphys.* XI. vii. 10), he attacks and refutes the view of 'the Pythagoreans and Speusippus,' that 'Good is rather a result of existence than the cause of it, as the flower is the result of the plant.'

In morals, Speusippus seems to have continued the arguments begun by Plato, against the Hedonistic theory of Aristippus. In the list of his works given by Diogenes,<sup>13</sup> the following are mentioned—*περὶ ἡδονῆς* ἁ. 'Αρίστιππος ἁ. His polemic appears to have been one-sided, and his views extreme. One of his arguments on the subject of pleasure, is alluded to by Aristotle, *Eth.* x. ii. 5, and expressly mentioned with his name by Eudemus, VII. xiii. 1. It seems very probable that other arguments against pleasure, which are refuted by Aristotle and Eudemus, may have occurred in the treatise on Pleasure written by Speusippus. Another Platonist, with exactly opposite views on pleasure, was Eudoxus. Of him hardly

<sup>13</sup> Also he seems to have written on Justice, The Citizen, Legislation, and Philosophy.

anything is known. He appears to have been an astronomer, and his personal character is highly praised by Aristotle, *Eth.* x. ii. i.

Out of the school of Plato, Aristotle appears to have had a close personal friend, namely, Xenocrates, who accompanied him to Atarneus, on the death of Plato. He was a voluminous writer, and seems to have endeavoured to carry out the system of Plato on particular points, and to give it a more practical direction. Besides many treatises on dialectic, the Ideas, science, genera and species, divisions, thought, nature, the gods, &c., Diogenes also attributes to him two books on Happiness, two on Virtue, one on the State, one on the Power of the Law, &c. The ancients ascribed to him a high moral tone of thought, saying, that he considered virtue as alone valuable in itself. He seems, however, to have allowed the existence of a *δύναμις ὑπερτερὰ* in external fortuné, which is, perhaps, alluded to by Aristotle.<sup>13</sup> His disciples, Polemo and Crantor, appear to have had almost exclusively an ethical direction. We must regret the loss of the writings of these early Academics, for we should, no doubt, find common to them much that is to be found in the system of Aristotle. A great work is always the creature of its times, and it is only by knowing those times that we can know it fully or judge it aright. And yet, on the whole, none of the Platonists appears individually to have been of sufficient importance to have greatly influenced Aristotle either in the way of communication or of antagonism.

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<sup>13</sup> Ἄλλοι δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐκτὸς εὐτηρίαν συμπαλαμβάνουσιν.

## ESSAY IV.

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### *On the Philosophical Forms in the Ethics of Aristotle.*

THE shade of Plato, we have observed, might have admired in the *Ethics* of Aristotle the advance of philosophy. This advance was twofold, on the one hand material, consisting in a rapid accumulation of experience and the carrying out of analysis in all directions; on the other hand it was formal, consisting in a new and more definite terminology, and the forms, categories, or leading ideas, upon which science was now made to depend. No account of the *Ethics* would be complete without some examination of what is most exclusively Aristotelian, not only in the material ideas which are interwoven with the subject, namely, those views of nature, the Deity, and the human soul, which to some extent pervade it; but also in the forms of thought on which the system is constructed, and which might be said to constitute the warp of the entire texture. Let us, then, first consider the formal element of this philosophy, leaving for a future Essay some notice of the physical and theological views of Aristotle, in so far as they influence his moral theories. The forms of thought which Aristotle worked out for himself are the most remarkable feature of his system; he applied them to all subjects, and to a great extent has left them stamped on language ever since. Besides the host of logical formulæ, which before Aristotle had no definite existence, the most universal of his leading ideas may be said to have been the doctrine of the four causes, and the opposition of δύναμις and ἐνέργεια. These forms we find repeatedly occurring in the

pages of the ethical treatise, and the more deeply we study it, the more we become aware that these are not mere modes of expression, but that in truth they constitute most important points of view in the analysis of human life and action. Another peculiarity has to be noticed, and that is, that these metaphysical ideas are re-acted on and changed by being brought into Ethics. Τέλος and ἐνέργεια are no longer mere abstractions, but are full of moral meaning. Unless we understand the philosophical bearing and the purport of these conceptions, not only will many a sentence of Aristotle remain for us written in an absolutely unknown language, but also it will be hopeless and out of the question to think of comprehending his moral system, as a whole. To the above-mentioned, we may add some consideration of the doctrine of Μεσότης, as containing in itself an application to ethical subjects of a more general philosophical formula, and if we subjoin to these some account of the 'Practical Syllogism,' as it appears in Books VI. and VII., we shall be able to see how what was begun by Aristotle in these matters, was carried out further by the Peripatetic school.

I. Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes arose probably from a combination and modification of conceptions which occur separately in Plato, namely, the contrast of matter and form, of means and end, of production and existence. Every individual object might be said to be the meeting-point of these oppositions; it is what it is by reason of the matter out of which it has sprung, the motive cause which gave it birth, the idea or form which it realizes, the end or object which it was intended to attain. Thus knowledge of anything implies knowing it from these four points of view, or knowing its four causes. The End or final cause, however, as is natural, rises to an eminence beyond the other conceptions, and though it must always stand opposed to matter, it tends to merge the



other two causes into itself. The end of anything, that for sake of which anything exists, can hardly be separated from the perfection of that thing, from its idea and form; thus the formal cause or definition becomes absorbed into the final cause (*ὁρίζεται γὰρ ἕκαστον τῷ τέλει*, *Eth.* III. vii. 6).

In the same way the End mixes itself up with the efficient cause, the desire for the end gives the first impulse of motion, the final cause of anything becomes identical with the good of that thing, so that the end and the good become synonymous terms. And this is not only the case with regard to individual objects, but all nature and the whole world exist for the sake of, and in dependence on, their final cause, which is the good. This existing as an object of contemplation and desire, though itself immovable, moves all things.<sup>1</sup> And so the world is rendered finite, for all nature desiring the good and tending towards an end is harmonized and united.

In this way is the unity of nature conceived by Aristotle, it is a unity of idea. The idea of the Good as final cause pervades the world, and the world is suspended from it. In the same form his ethical philosophy presents itself. Human life and action are rendered finite by being directed to their end or final cause, the good attainable in action. The question of the *Ethics* is, *Τί ἐστι τὸ τῶν πρακτῶν τέλος*; And we might say, altering the words quoted from the *Metaphysics*—From this principle, from the End of action, the whole of human life is suspended.

An end or final cause implies intelligence, implies a mind to see and desire it. The appearance of ends and means in nature is a proof of design in the operations of nature, and this Aristotle distinctly recognises (*Nat. Ausc.* II. viii.). When

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<sup>1</sup> *Κινεῖ δὲ ὧδε τὸ ὁρεκτὸν καὶ τὸ κινούμενον.—Ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀρχῆς ἡρτηται ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ φύσις.—Metaph.* XI. vii. 2-6.

we come to *Ethics*, What is meant by an End of human action? For whom is this an end? Is it an end fixed by a higher intelligence? In short, is the principle of Aristotle the same as the religious principle, that man is born to work out the purposes of his Maker? To this it must be answered, that Aristotle is indefinite in his physical theory as to the relation of God to the design exhibited in creation. And so, too, he is not explicit, in the *Ethics*, as to God's moral government of the world. On the whole, we may say at present that 'moral government,' in our sense of the words, does not at all form part of Aristotle's system. His point of view rather is that as physical things strive all, though unconsciously, after the good attainable by them under their several limitations, so man may consciously strive after the good attainable in life. We do not find in the *Ethics* the expression τέλος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, but τῶν πρακτῶν τέλος (I. vii. 8), τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων τέλος (x. vi. 1), τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθόν (I. xiii. 5). It is best, therefore, to exclude religious associations (as being un-Aristotelian) from our conception of the ethical τέλος, and then we may be free to acknowledge that it is evidently meant to have a definite relation to the nature and constitution of man. Thus Aristotle assumes that the desires of man are so framed as to imply the existence of this τέλος (*Eth.* I. ii. 1). And he asserts that man can only realize it in the sphere of his own proper functions (ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, I. vii. 10), and in accordance with the law of his proper nature and its harmonious development (κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ἀρετὴν, I. vii. 15).

Is man, then, according to this system, to be regarded similarly to one of the flowers of the field, which obeying the law of its organization springs and blooms and attains its own peculiar perfection? This is no doubt one side, so to speak, of Aristotle's view. But there is also another side. For, while each part of the creation realizes its proper end, and, in the

language of the Bible, 'is very good,' this end exists not *for* the inanimate or unconscious creatures themselves, it only exists *in* them. But the ethical τέλος not only exists *in* man, but also *for* man; not only is the good realized *in him*, but it is recognized by him as such; it is the end not only of his nature, but also of his desires; it stands before his thoughts and wishes and highest consciousness as the absolute, that in which he can rest, that which is in and for itself desirable (*ἀπλῶς δὴ τέλειον τὸ καθ' αὐτὸ αἰρετὸν ἀεί*, i. vii. 4). The ends of physical things are for other minds to contemplate, they are ends objectively. But ends of moral beings are ends subjectively, realized by and contemplated by those moral beings themselves. The final cause, then, in *Ethics*, is viewed so to speak, from the inside. Or rather the peculiarity is, that the objective and the subjective sides of the conception both have their weight in Aristotle's system, and are run into one another. The τέλος τῶν πρακτῶν, or absolute end of action, has two forms, which are not clearly separated; in the first place it is represented subjectively as happiness, and in the second place objectively as the right.

It has been said that the ancient Ethical systems were theories of the chief good, rather theories of duty. And Kant brings against Aristotle the charge that his system is one of mere eudæmonism. We shall have an opportunity in a future Essay of touching upon the relations of this conception 'duty' to the ancient systems. At present it will suffice to show that there is some unfairness in the charge brought by Kant, and that it ignores the true characteristics of Aristotle's Ethical doctrine. It is unfair to charge Aristotle with mere 'eudæmonism' simply on account of his making a definition of 'happiness' the leading principle of his *Ethics*. This word 'happiness' is only a popular way of statement; Aristotle tells us that it is the popular word for the chief good (*Eth.*

1. iv. 2). Again, during his whole discussion on the virtues, and on moral actions, there is no mention of happiness as connected with these, as if good acts were to be done for the sake of happiness. There is only one place and that is in the discussion on happiness itself, where he speaks of it as 'The end and prize of virtue.'<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere he speaks of 'the beautiful' as being the end of virtue.<sup>3</sup> But again the 'happiness' which Aristotle defines as the chief good does not seem immediately, but only inferentially, to imply pleasure. Pleasure (as we shall see hereafter) is rather argued and proved to belong to happiness by a sort of after-thought, and is not with Aristotle a primary part of the conception. Happiness with Aristotle is something different from what we mean by it, so from this point of view, above all, the charge of eudæmonism falls to the ground.

Aristotle's question is, What is the chief good for man? But this he resolves into another form, What is the *τῆς τελειότητος* τέλος? What in human life and action is the End-in-itself? How deep is the moral significance of this conception—the absolute end! Can anything small or frivolous, or anything like mere pleasure and enjoyment come up to its requirements, and appear in the deepest depths of the human consciousness to be something beyond which we cannot go—the absolute satisfaction of our nature? Essentially and necessarily, that only can be called a *τέλος* which has in itself a moral worth and goodness. This also Aristotle says 'has a sweetness and pleasure of its own, but one quite different from that which springs from any other sources. Men rarely attain to it; but desiring the satisfaction it affords, they seize in its place the pleasure derived from amusements, on account of this latter

<sup>2</sup> Τὸ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἄθλον καὶ τέλος.—  
Eth. I. ix. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Τοῦ καλοῦ ἕνεκα, τοῦτο γὰρ τέλος  
τῆς ἀρετῆς.—Eth. III. vii. 2.

having some sort of resemblance to the satisfaction which the mind feels in moral acts which are of the nature of an end.<sup>4</sup>

The deep moral pleasure which attaches to noble acts, Aristotle describes as triumphing even over the physical pain and outward horrors which may attend the exercise of courage.<sup>5</sup> And he acknowledges that in many cases this may be the *only* pleasure attending upon virtuous actions.<sup>6</sup>

We see in these passages how the objective and subjective import of the *τέλος* are blended together. The end and the consciousness of the end are not separated. In the pleasure which Aristotle speaks of as attaching to the moral *τέλος*, we see something that answers to what we should call 'the approval of conscience.' Only to say that Aristotle meant this, would be to mix up things modern and ancient. It is better to keep before us as clearly as possible his point of view, which is, that a good action is an End-in-itself, as being the perfection<sup>7</sup> of our nature, and that for the sake of which (*οὐ ἕνεκα*) our moral faculties before existed, hence bringing a pleasure and inward satisfaction with it; something in which the mind can rest pleased and acquiescent; something which possesses the qualities of being *καλόν*, *ὠρισμένον*, and *ἐνέργεια τελεία*.

<sup>4</sup> *Politics* viii. v. 12. 'Ἐν μὲν τῷ τέλει συμβαίνει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὀλιγάκις γίνεσθαι. . . . Συμβέβηκε δὲ ποιείσθαι τὰς παιδίας τέλους· ἔχει γὰρ ἰσως ἡδονήν τινα καὶ τὸ τέλος, ἀλλ' οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν· ζητοῦντες δὲ ταύτην, λαμβάνουσιν ὡς ταύτην ἐκείνην, διὰ τὸ τῷ τέλει τῶν πράξεων ἔχειν ὁμοιωμὰ τι.

<sup>5</sup> *Eth.* iii. ix. 3. Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ δόξειεν ἂν εἶναι τὸ κατὰ τὴν ἀνδρείαν τέλος ἡδύ.

<sup>6</sup> *Eth.* iii. ix. 5. Οὐ δὲ ἐν ἀπάσαις ταῖς ἀρεταῖς ἡδέως ἐνεργεῖν ὑπάρχει, πλὴν ἐφ' ὅσον τοῦ τέλους ἐφάπτεται.

<sup>7</sup> In another passage (*Eth.* iii. vii. 6), Aristotle seems to use the term

*τέλος* in a more purely objective sense to denote perfection. He says, 'The τέλος of every individual moral act is the same with that of the formed moral character' (*τέλος δὲ πάσης ἐνεργείας ἐστὶ τὸ κατὰ τὴν ἔξιν*). The whole passage is a difficult one; it seems to come to this—An individual act can only be said to have attained perfection when it exhibits the same qualities as the formed moral character—*e.g.*, a brave act is only perfectly brave when it is done as a brave man would do it, consciously for its own sake, or for the sake of the noble (*καλοῦ ἕνεκα*), &c.

We observe how in the separate parts of life, in the development of each of the various faculties, Aristotle considers an end to be attainable; how he attaches a supreme value to particular acts, and idealizes the importance of the passing moment: how he attributes to each moment a capability of being converted out of a mere means, and mere link in the chain of life, to be an End-in-itself, something in which life is, as it were, summed up. But if in action, and in an exercise of the moral faculties, an end is attainable, this is, according to the system of Aristotle, only faintly and imperfectly an end, compared with what is attainable in contemplation by the exercise of the philosophic thought.

In both senses of the word *τέλος*, both as perfection and as happiness, Aristotle seems to have placed virtue below philosophy. Philosophy is in the first place the highest human excellence; it is the development of the highest faculty.<sup>8</sup> In the second place, it contains the most absolute satisfaction, it is most entirely desirable for its own sake, and not as a means to anything else.<sup>9</sup> Whereas the practical virtues are all in a sense means to this. Courage is for war, which is for the sake of the fruition of peace; and in what does this consist? If the practical side of our nature be summed up in the one faculty wisdom (*φρόνησις*), this may be regarded after all as subordinate and instrumental to philosophy (*σοφία*), the perfection of the speculative side.<sup>10</sup> So too in Politics, the end, or in other words the highest perfection and the highest happiness, being identical for the state and the individual, in what is this constituted? Not in the busy and restless action of war or diplomacy, not in means and measures to some

<sup>8</sup> *Eth.* x. vii. 1. *Εἰ δ' ἐστὶν ἡ εὐδαιμονία κατ' ἀρετὴν ἐνέργεια, εὐλογον κατὰ τὴν κρατίστην αὐτὴ δ' ἂν εἴη τοῦ ἀρίστου, κ.τ.λ.*

<sup>9</sup> *Eth.* x. vii. 5. *Δόξαι τ' ἂν αὐτῇ μόνῃ δι' αὐτὴν ἀγαπᾶσθαι.*

<sup>10</sup> *Eth.* vi. xiii. 8. *Ἐκείνης οὖν ἕνεκα ἐπιδίδται, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκείνη.*

ulterior result, but in those thoughts and contemplations which find their end and satisfaction in themselves. Philosophy, therefore, and speculation are, according to Aristotle, the end not only of the individual, but also of the state.<sup>11</sup> 'If it be true to say, that happiness consists in doing well, a life of action must be best both for the state, and for the individual. But we need not, as some do, suppose that a life of action implies relation to others, or that those only are active thoughts which are concerned with the results of action; but far rather we must consider those speculations and thoughts to be so which have their end in themselves, and which are for their own sake.'

A moment of contemplative thought (θεωρητικὴ ἐνέργεια) is most perfectly and absolutely an end. It is sought for no result but for itself. It is a state of peace, which is the crown of all exertion (ἀσχολούμεθα ἵνα σχολάζωμεν). It is the realization of the divine in man, and constitutes the most absolute and all-sufficient happiness,<sup>12</sup> being, as far as possible in human things, independent of external circumstances.<sup>13</sup>

This then constitutes the most adequate answer to the great question of Ethics, What is the chief good, or τί ἐστι τὸ τῶν πρακτῶν τέλος; as far as a separate and individual moment of life is concerned. But a difficulty suggests itself with regard to life viewed as a whole. 'Philosophic thought,'

<sup>11</sup> *Pol.* vii. iii. 8. 'Ἄλλ' εἰ ταῦτα λέγεται καλῶς καὶ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν εὐπραγίαν θετέον, καὶ κοινῇ πάσης πόλεως ἂν εἴη καὶ καθ' ἕκαστον ἀριστος βίος ὁ πρακτικὸς. 'Ἄλλὰ τὸν πρακτικὸν οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι πρὸς ἑτέρους, καθάπερ οἴονται τινες, οὐδὲ τὰς διανοίας εἶναι μόνας ταύτας πρακτικὰς τὰς τῶν ἀποβαινόντων χάριν γιγνομένης ἐκ τοῦ

πράττειν, ἀλλὰ πόλιν μᾶλλον τὰς αὐτοτέλεις καὶ τὰς αὐτῶν ἐνεκεν θεωρίας καὶ διανοήσεως.

<sup>12</sup> *Eth.* x. viii. 7. 'Ἡ τελεία εὐδαιμονία θεωρητικὴ τίς ἐστιν ἐνέργεια.

<sup>13</sup> *Eth.* x. vii. 4. "Ἡ τε λεγομένη αὐτάρκεια περὶ τὴν θεωρητικὴν μάλιστα ἂν εἴη.

says Aristotle, 'will be absolutely perfect happiness if extended over a whole life. For in happiness there must be no short-coming.'<sup>14</sup> But, as we shall see more clearly with regard to *ἐνέργεια*, it cannot actually be so extended. What then is the result? If Aristotle accepts the absolute satisfaction and worth of a moment as the end of life, his principle becomes identical with the *μονόχρονος ἡδονῆς* of the Cyrenaics (see above, p. 131). If, again, he requires an absolute *τέλος* of permanent duration, his theory of human good becomes a mere ideal. Here then is a dilemma between the horns of which Aristotle endeavours to steer, on the one hand acknowledging (*Eth.* i. vii. 16), that 'A single swallow will not make a summer;' on the other hand urging objections against the saying of Solon (*Eth.* i. x.), that 'No man can be called happy as long as he lives.' He says the chief good must be *ἐν βίῳ τελείῳ*, not a perfect life, but *in* a perfect life—indicating by this expression that the absolute good, as it exists in and for the consciousness, is independent of time and duration; but still, as we belong to a world of time and space, that this inner supreme good must have its setting in an adequate complete sphere of external circumstances. About this word *τελείῳ* there is an ambiguity of which probably Aristotle, himself, was half conscious; its associations of meaning are twofold, the one popular, conveying the notion of the 'complete,' the 'perfect,' the other philosophic, implying that which is in itself desirable, that in which the mind finds satisfaction, the absolute. Taking a signification between the two, we may conceive Aristotle to have meant, that the chief good must be an absolute mode of the consciousness, and that this must be attained in a sphere of outward circumstances themselves partaking of the nature of absolute perfection. Ari-

<sup>14</sup> Ἡ τελεία δὴ εὐδαιμονία αὕτη ἀν- | λειον' οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀτελές ἐστι τῶν τῆς  
εἰς ἀνθρώπου, λαβούσα μήκος βίου τέ- | εὐδαιμονίας, *Eth.* x. vii. 7.



stotle's conception, then, of the chief good has two sides, the one internal, ideal, out of all relation to time, which speaks of the happiness as the absolute good, that end which is the sum of all means, that which could not possibly be improved by any addition (*Eth.* i. vii. 8) ; the other side, which is external and practical, goes quite against the Cyrenaic principle of regarding the present as all in all, and also against the Cynic view which would set the mind above external circumstances (*Eth.* i. v. 6) ; this part of the theory considers happiness as compounded of various more or less essential elements, and shows how far the more essential parts (τὰ κύριον τῆς εὐδαιμονίας) can outbalance the less essential. It requires permanence of duration, but it looks for this in the stability of the formed mental state, which is always tending to reproduce moments of absolute worth.

The End-in-itself renders life a rounded whole, like a work of art, or a product of nature. The knowledge of it is to give definiteness to the aims, 'So that we shall be now like archers knowing what to shoot at' (*Eth.* i. ii. 2). In the realization of it, we are to feel that there need be no more reaching onwards towards infinity, for all the desires and powers will have found their satisfaction (*Eth.* i. ii. 1). Closely connected then is this system with the view that what is finite is good. 'Life,' says Aristotle, 'is a good to the good man, because it is finite' (*Eth.* ix. ix. 7). At first sight these sayings suggest the idea of a cramped and limited theory of life, as if all were made round and artistic, and no room were left for the aspirations of the soul. It must be remembered, however, that that which is here spoken of as making life finite, is itself the absolute,—*that*, above and beyond and outside of which, the mind can conceive nothing. And this absolute end is yet further represented as the deepest moments either of the moral consciousness, or of that philosophic reason which

## THE DOCTRINE OF 'ENÉRGΕΙΑ.

is an approach to the nature of the divine being. It must be remembered also that 'the finite' (τὸ ὀρισμένον) does not mean 'the restricted,' as if expressing that in which limits have been put upon the possibilities of good, but rather the good itself. Good and even existence cannot be conceived except under a law, and the finite is with Aristotle an essentially positive idea. Only so much negation enters into it as is necessary to constitute definiteness and form in contradistinction to the chaotic. Truly we cannot in our conceptions pass out of the human mind; that which is absolute and an end for the mind cannot be a mere limited and restricted conception; but rather nothing can be conceived beyond it. Something might be said on the relation of the Ethical τέλος to the idea of a future life, but this can be better said hereafter.

II. 'Actuality' is perhaps the nearest philosophical representative of the ἐνέργεια of Aristotle. It is derived from it through the Latin of the Schoolmen, 'actus' being their translation of ἐνέργεια, out of which the longer and more abstract form has grown. The word 'energy,' which comes more directly from ἐνέργεια, has ceased to convey the philosophical meaning of its original, being restricted to the notion of force and vigour. The employment of the term 'energy,' as a translation of ἐνέργεια, has been a material hindrance to the proper understanding of Aristotle. This is especially the case with regard to the *Ethics*, where there is an appearance of plausibility, though an utterly fallacious one, in such a translation. To substitute 'actuality' in the place of 'energy' would certainly have this advantage, that it would point to the metaphysical conception lying at the root of all the various applications of ἐνέργεια. But 'actuality' is a word with far too little flexibility to be adapted for expressing all these various applications. No conception equally plastic

with *ἐνέργεια*, and at all answering to it can be found in modern thought. And therefore there is no term which will uniformly translate it. Our only course can be, first to endeavour to understand its philosophical meaning as part of Aristotle's system, and secondly to notice its special applications in a book like the *Ethics*. Any rendering of its import in the various places where it occurs must be rather of the nature of paraphrase than of translation.

'*Ενέργεια* is not more accurately defined by Aristotle, than as the correlative and opposite of *δύναμις*. He implies, that we must rather feel its meaning than seek to define it. 'Actuality' may be in various ways opposed to 'potentiality,' and the import of the conception depends entirely on their relation to each other.<sup>15</sup> 'Now *ἐνέργεια* is the existence of a thing not in the sense of its potentially existing. The term 'potentially' we use, for instance, of the statue in the block, and of the half in the whole, (since it might be subtracted,) and of a person knowing a thing, even when he is not thinking of it, but might do so; whereas *ἐνέργεια* is the opposite. By applying the various instances our meaning will be plain, and one must not seek a definition in each case, but rather grasp the conception of the analogy as a whole,—that it is, as that which builds to that which has the capacity for build-

<sup>15</sup> *Metaphys.* VIII. ii. 4. "Ἐστι δ' ἡ ἐνέργεια τὸ ὑπάρχειν τὸ πρᾶγμα, μὴ οὕτως ὥσπερ λέγομεν δύναμι. Λέγομεν δὲ δύναμι, οἷον, ἐν τῷ ξύλῳ Ἑρμῆν καὶ ἐν τῇ ὕλῃ τὴν ἡμίσειαν, ὅτι ἀφαιρεθεὶς ἂν, καὶ ἐπιστήμονα καὶ τὸν μὴ θεωροῦντα, ἐὰν δυνατὸς ᾖ θεωρῆσαι· τὸ δὲ ἐνέργεια· δῆλον δ' ἐπὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστα τῇ ἐπαγωγῇ, ὃ βουλόμεθα λέγειν, καὶ οὐ δεῖ παντὸς ὅρον ζητεῖν, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀνάλογον συνορθεῖν—ὅτι ὡς τὸ οἰκοδομοῦν πρὸς τὸ οἰκοδομικόν· καὶ τὸ ἐργηγορὸς πρὸς

τὸ καθεῦδον· καὶ τὸ ὀρῶν πρὸς τὸ μόνον μὲν, ὅψιν δὲ ἔχον· καὶ τὸ ἀποκεκριμένον ἐκ τῆς ὕλης πρὸς τὴν ὕλην· καὶ τὸ ἀπειργασμένον πρὸς τὸ ἀνέργαστον. Ταύτης δὲ τῆς διαφορᾶς θάτερον μῶριον ἔστω ἡ ἐνέργεια ἀφωρισμένη, θατέρῳ δὲ τὸ δυνατόν. Λέγεται δὲ ἐνέργεια οὐ πάντα ὁμοίως, ἀλλ' ἡ τὸ ἀνάλογον, ὡς τοῦτο ἐν τούτῳ ἢ πρὸς τοῦτο. Τὸ δ' ἐν τῷδε ἢ πρὸς τόδε. Τὰ μὲν γὰρ ὡς κίνησις πρὸς δύναμιν, τὰ δ' ὡς οὐσία πρὸς τινα ὕλην.

ing; as the waking to the sleeping; as that which sees to that which has sight, but whose eyes are closed; as the definite form to the shapeless matter; as the complete to the unaccomplished. In this contrast, let the *ἐνέργεια* be set off as forming the one side, and on the other let the potential stand. Things are said to be *ἐνέργεια* not always in like manner, (except so far as there is an analogy, that as this thing is in this, or related to this, so is that in that, or related to that,) for sometimes it implies motion as opposed to the capacity for motion, and sometimes complete existence opposed to undeveloped matter.'

The word *ἐνέργεια* does not occur in Plato, though the opposition of the 'virtual' and the 'actual' may be found implicitly contained in<sup>16</sup> some parts of his writings. Perhaps there is no genuine passage<sup>17</sup> now extant of any writer previous to Aristotle in which it occurs. It is the substantive form of the adjective *ἐνεργής* which is to be found in Xenophon, *Memorab.* III. v. 11, and in Aristotle's *Topics*, I. xii. 1. But Aristotle, by a false etymology, seems to connect it immediately with the words<sup>18</sup> *ἐν ἔργῳ*. To all appearance the idea of its opposition to *δύναμις* was first suggested by the Megarians, who asserted that 'Nothing could be said to have a capacity for doing any thing, unless it was in the act of doing that thing.'<sup>19</sup> This assertion itself was part of the dialectic of the Megarians, by which they endeavoured to establish the Eleatic principles,

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Theaetetus*, p. 157. Οὐτε γὰρ ποιοῦν ἐστὶ τι, πρὶν ἂν τῷ πάσχοντι ἐνέλθῃ, οὔτε πάσχον, πρὶν ἂν τῷ ποιοῦντι, κ.τ.λ.

<sup>17</sup> For the fragment of Philolaus, apud Stob. *Ecl. Phys.* I. xx. 2, is very suspicious. It is as follows:—Διὸ καὶ καλῶς ἔχει λέγειν κόσμον ἡμεν ἐνέργειαν αἰδίου θεῶ τε καὶ γενέσιος κατὰ συνακ-  
ολουθίαν τὰς μεταβλητικὰς φύσις.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Metaphys.* viii. viii. 11. Διὸ καὶ τοῦτομα λέγεται ἐνέργεια κατὰ τὸ ἔργον καὶ συντελεῖ πρὸς τὴν ἐντελέχειαν.

<sup>19</sup> Εἰσὶ δὲ τινες οἱ φασιν, οἷον οἱ Μεγαρικοί, ὅταν ἐνεργῇ μόνον δύνασθαι, ὅταν δὲ μὴ ἐνεργῇ οὐ δύνασθαι, οἷον τῶν μὴ οἰκοδομοῦντων οὐ δύνασθαι οἰκοδομεῖν.

and to prove by the subtleties of the reason, against all evidence of the senses, that the world is absolutely one, immovable, and unchangeable. We cannot be exactly certain of the terms employed by the Megarians themselves in expressing the above-quoted position, for Aristotle is never very accurate about the exact form in which he gives the<sup>20</sup> opinions of earlier philosophers. We cannot be sure whether the Megarians said precisely *ὅταν ἐνεργῇ μόνον δύνασθαι*. But at all events they said something equivalent, and Aristotle taking the suggestion worked out the whole theory of the contrast between *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια*, in its almost universal applicability.

At first these terms were connected, apparently with the idea of<sup>21</sup> motion. But since *δύναμις* has the double meaning of 'possibility of existence' as well as 'capacity of action,' there arose the double contrast of action opposed to the capacity for action; actual existence opposed to possible existence or potentiality. To express accurately this latter opposition Aristotle seems to have introduced the term *ἐντελέχεια*, of which the most natural account is, that it is a compound of *ἐν τέλει ἔχειν*, 'being in the state of perfection,' an adjective<sup>22</sup> *ἐντελεχῆς* being constructed on the analogy of *νουνεχῆς*. But in fact this distinction between *ἐντελέχεια* and *ἐνέργεια* is<sup>23</sup> not maintained. The former word is of comparatively rare occurrence, while we find everywhere throughout Aristotle *ἐνέργεια*, as he says, *πρὸς ἐντελέχειαν*

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Metaph.* xi. ii. 3. Καὶ ὡς Δημόκριτός φησιν, ἦν ὁμοῦ πάντα δύναμει ἐνεργεῖα δ' οὐ. xi. vi. 7. Διὸ ἐνιοὶ ποιούσιν αὐτὴν ἐνέργειαν, οἷον Δεῦκιππος καὶ Πλάτων. In these passages Aristotle expresses the ideas of his predecessors in his own formulæ.

<sup>21</sup> *Metaph.* viii. iii. 9. Ἐλήλυθε δ' ἡ ἐνέργεια τοῖον, ἢ πρὸς ἐντελέχειαν συντιθεμένη καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄλλα, ἐκ τῶν

κινήσεων μάλιστα, δοκεῖ γὰρ ἡ ἐνέργεια μάλιστα ἢ κινήσεις εἶναι.

<sup>22</sup> *De Gen. et Corr.* ii. x. ii. Συνεπλήρωσε τὸ ὄλον ὁ θεὸς ἐντελεχῆ ποιήσας τὴν γένεσιν.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *Metaph.* viii. i. 2. Ἐπὶ πλεον γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ ἐνέργεια τῶν μόνον λεγομένων κατὰ κίνησιν. *Eth.* vii. xiv. 8. Οὐ γὰρ μόνον κινήσεως ἐστὶν ἐνέργεια ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀκινήσεως.

συντιθεμένη 'mixed up with the idea of complete existence.' As we saw above, it is contrasted with δύναμις, sometimes as implying motion, sometimes as 'form opposed to matter.'

In Physics δύναμις answers to the necessary conditions for the existence of anything before that thing exists. It thus corresponds to ὕλη, both to the πρώτη ὕλη, or matter absolutely devoid of all qualities, which is capable of becoming any definite substance, as, for instance, marble; and also to the ἐσχάτη ὕλη, or matter capable of receiving form, as marble the form of the statue. Marble then exists δυνάμει in the simple elements before it is marble. The statue exists δυνάμει in the marble before it is carved out. All objects of thought exist either purely δυνάμει, or purely ἐνεργεία, or both δυνάμει and ἐνεργεία. This division makes an entire chain of all the world. At the one end is matter, the πρώτη ὕλη, which has a merely potential existence, which is necessary as a condition, but which having no form and no qualities, is totally incapable of being realized by the mind. So it is also with the infinitely small or great; they exist always as possibilities, but, as is obvious, they never can be actually grasped by the perception. At the other end of the chain is God, οὐσία αἰδῖος καὶ ἐνέργεια ἄνευ δυνάμεως, who cannot be thought of as non-existing,<sup>24</sup> as otherwise than actual, who is the absolute, and the unconditioned. Between these two extremes is the whole row of creatures, which out of potentiality spring into actual being. In this theory we see the affinity between δύναμις and matter, ἐνέργεια and form. Thus Aristotle's conceptions are made to run into one another. Another affinity readily suggests itself, and that is between ἐνέργεια and τέλος. The

<sup>24</sup> It might be said that the being of God cannot be fully grasped or realized by our minds; but, according to the views of Aristotle, the everlast-

ing existence of God is an ἐνέργεια for His own mind. He is above all, the in and for Himself existing.

progress from δύναμις to ἐνέργεια is motion or production, (κίνησις or γένεσις.) But this motion or production, aiming at or tending to an end, is in itself imperfect (ἀτελής), it is a mere process not in itself and for its own sake desirable. And thus arises a contrast between κίνησις and ἐνέργεια, for the latter if it implies motion, is a motion desirable for its own sake, having its end in itself. Viewed relatively, however, κίνησις may sometimes be called ἐνέργεια. In reference to the capacity of action before existing, the action calls out into actuality that which was before only potential. Thus, for instance, in the process of building a house there is an ἐνέργεια of what was before the δύναμις οἰκοδομική. Viewed however in reference to the house itself, this is a mere process to the end aimed at, a γένεσις, or if it be called ἐνέργεια, it must strictly speaking be qualified as ἐνέργειά τις ἀτελής.<sup>25</sup> In short, just as the term τέλος is relatively applied to very subordinate ends, so too ἐνέργεια is relatively applied to what is from another point of view a mere γένεσις or κίνησις. This we find in *Eth.* i. i. 2, διαφορὰ δέ τις φαίνεται τῶν τελῶν· τὰ μὲν γάρ εἰσιν ἐνέργειαι, τὰ δὲ παρ' αὐτὰς ἔργα τινά.

Having traced some of the leading features of this distinction between δύναμις and ἐνέργεια, we may now proceed to observe how this form of thought stamped itself upon Ethics. We may ask, How is the category of the actual brought to bear upon moral questions, and how far is it reacted upon by moral associations? At the very outset of Aristotle's theory it appears. As soon as the proposition has been laid down that the chief good for man is only attainable in his proper work, and that this proper work is a peculiar kind of life, πρακτικὴ τις (ζωὴ) τοῦ λόγον ἔχοντος, Aristotle proceeds to assume (θετεῖν) that this life must be no mere possession (καθ' ἑξίν)

<sup>25</sup> *Metaph.* x. ix. 11.

of certain powers and latent tendencies, but 'in actuality, for this is the distinctive form of the conception.'<sup>26</sup> He then transforms the qualifying term *κατ' ἐνέργειαν* into a substantive idea, and makes it the chief part of his definition of the supreme good.<sup>27</sup> Thus the metaphysical category of *ἐνέργεια*, which comes first into Ethics merely as a form of thought, becomes henceforth material. It is identified with happiness.<sup>28</sup> In short, it becomes an ethical idea.

In this connexion (like its cognate *τέλος*) *ἐνέργεια* becomes at once something mental. It takes a subjective character, as existing now both in and for the mind. Moreover, in an exactly parallel way to the use of *τέλος*, it receives a double application. On the one hand it is applied to express moral action and the development of the moral powers, on the other hand to happiness and the fruition of life. It is in its latter meaning that *ἐνέργεια* is most purely subjective. Taken as a formula to express Aristotle's theory of virtue, we may consider it as applied in its more objective and simpler sense, though even here it is mixed up with psychological associations. We shall see how, under newly-invented metaphysical forms, Aristotle accounts for the moral nature of man.

Aristotle divides *δυνάμεις* into physical and mental.<sup>29</sup> Of these mental *δυνάμεις* it is characteristic that they are equally capacities of producing contraries, while the physical are restricted to one side of two contraries. The capacity of heat, for instance, is capable of producing heat alone; whereas the *δύναμις* *ιατρική*, as being a mental capacity, and connected

<sup>26</sup> Διττῶς δὲ καὶ ταύτης λεγομένης τὴν κατ' ἐνέργειαν θετόν· κυριώτερον γὰρ αὐτὴ δοκεῖ λέγεσθαι.

<sup>27</sup> Εἰ δ' ἐστὶν ἔργον ἀνθρώπου ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια κατὰ λόγον, κ.τ.λ.—εἰ δ' οὕτω τὸ ἀνθρώπων ἀγαθὸν ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια γίνεταί κατ' ἀρετὴν.

<sup>28</sup> *Eth.* I. xiii. 1. 'Ἐπεὶ δ' ἐστὶν ἡ

εὐδαιμονία ψυχῆς ἐνέργειά τις κατ' ἀρετὴν. *Of.* I. x. 1, ix. ix. 5, x. vi. 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Metaph.* viii. ii. 1. 'Ἐπεὶ δ' αἱ μὲν ἐν τοῖς ἀψύχοις ἐνυπάρχουσιν ἀρχαὶ τοιαῦται, αἱ δ' ἐν τοῖς ἐμψύχοις καὶ ἐν ψυχῇ, καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐν τῷ λόγῳ ἔχοντι, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ τῶν δυνάμεων αἱ μὲν ἔσσονται ἄλογαι, αἱ δὲ μετὰ λόγον.



with the discursive reason, can produce indifferently either health or sickness. From this Aristotle deduces the first step of the doctrine of free-will, namely, that the mind is not bound by any physical necessity. For he argues that, given the requisite active and passive conditions, there is a necessity for a physical *δύναμις* to act or suffer in a particular way; but since the mental *δύναμις* is equally a capacity of contraries, if there were any necessity for its development, it must be necessitated to produce contraries at the same time, which is impossible. Therefore there must be some other influence which controls the mental *δύναμις*, and determines into which side of the two contraries it shall be developed, and this is either desire or reasonable purpose.<sup>30</sup> Connected with this point is another of still greater importance for the ethical theory. Not only in the use and exercise of a moral or mental *δύναμις*, is the individual above the control of mere external or physical circumstances, but also the very acquirement of these *δυνάμεις* depends on the individual. For the higher capacities are not inherent, but acquired.

In considering how this can be, we may follow the logical order of the question according to Aristotle, and ask which exists first, the *δύναμις* or the *ἐνέργεια*? The answer is, that as a conception, in point of thought (*λόγῳ*), the *ἐνέργεια* must necessarily be prior; in short, we know nothing of the *δύναμις*, except from our knowledge of the *ἐνέργεια*. In point of time (*χρόνῳ*) the case is different; each individual creature exists first *δυνάμει*, afterwards *ἐνεργείᾳ*. This assertion, however, must be confined to each individual; for, as a necessity of thought, we are led to refer the potential existence of each thing to the actual existence of something before (a flower, for instance, owes its potential existence in the seed, to the actual

<sup>30</sup> Ἀνάγκη ἄρα ἑτερόν τι εἶναι τὸ κύριον. Δέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὁρεξὺν ἢ προαίρεσιν. *Metaphys.* VIII. v. 2.

existence of another flower before it); and so the world is eternal, for an ἐνέργεια must be supposed as everlastingly pre-existing. But even in the individual there are some things in which the ἐνέργεια seems prior to the δύναμις; there are things which the individual seems to have no 'power of doing' until he does them; he acquires the power, in fact, by doing them.<sup>31</sup> This phenomenon gives rise to a classification of δυνάμεις into the physical, the passive, and the inherent on the one hand, and the mental or acquired on the other.<sup>32</sup> The merely physical capacities of our nature exist independent of any act or effort on the part of the individual.<sup>33</sup> And so, also, is it with the senses.<sup>34</sup> But the contrary is the case with regard to moral virtue, which does not exist in us as a capacity (δύναμις); in other words, not as a gift of nature (φύσει), previous to moral action.<sup>35</sup> We acquire the capacity for virtue by doing virtuous things. It will be seen at once that a sort of paradox is here involved. 'How can it be said that we become just by doing just things? If we do just things we are just already.' The answer of Aristotle to this difficulty, would seem to be as follows:—

1. Virtue follows the analogy of the arts, in which the first

<sup>31</sup> *Metaphys.* VIII. viii. 6. Διὸ καὶ δοκεῖ ἀδύνατον εἶναι οἰκοδομῶν εἶναι μὴ οἰκοδομήσαντα μὴθέν, ἢ καθαριστὴν μὴ-θὲν καθαρίσαντα· ὁ γὰρ μανθάνων καθαρίζειν καθαρίζων μανθάνει καθαρίζων, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι.

<sup>32</sup> *Metaphys.* VIII. v. 1. Ἀπασῶν δὲ τῶν δυνάμεων οὐσαν τῶν μὲν συγγενῶν, ὡς τῶν αἰσθησέων· τῶν δὲ ἕθει, ὡς τῆς τοῦ αὐλεῖν τῶν δὲ μαθήσει, ὡς τῆς τῶν τεχνῶν, τὰς μὲν ἀνάγκη προεργήσαντας ἔχειν ὅσαι ἔθει καὶ λόγῳ· τὰς δὲ μὴ τοιαύτας καὶ τὰς ἐπὶ τοῦ πάσχειν οὐκ ἀνάγκη.

<sup>33</sup> *Eth.* I. xiii. 11. Τὴν τοιαύτην γὰρ δύναμιν τῆς ψυχῆς (τοῦ τρέφεσθαι καὶ

αὔξεσθαι) ἐν ἅπασιν τοῖς τρεφομένοις θεῖη τις ἂν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐμβρύοις—δοκεῖ ἐν τοῖς ὕπνοις ἐνεργεῖν μάλιστα τὸ μέριον τοῦτο καὶ ἡ δύναμις αὕτη.

<sup>34</sup> *Eth.* II. i. 4. τὰς δυνάμεις τούτων πρότερον κομιζόμεθα, ὕστερον δὲ τὰς ἐνεργείας ἀποδίδομεν. This doctrine is opposed to some of the modern discoveries of psychology, as, for instance, Berkeley's 'Theory of Vision.' It is corrected, however, in some degree by Aristotle's doctrine of κοινὴ αἴσθησις.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* τὰς δ' ἀρετὰς λαμβάνομεν ἐνεργήσαντες πρότερον, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων τεχνῶν.

essays of the learner may by chance, or by the guidance of his master (ἀπὸ τύχης καὶ ἄλλου ὑποθεμένου), attain a sort of success and an artistic appearance, but the learner is no artist as yet.

2. These 'just acts,' by which we acquire justice, are, on nearer inspection, not really just; they want the moral qualification of that settled internal character in the heart and mind of the agent, without which no external act is virtuous in the highest sense of the term. They are tendencies towards the acquirement of this character, as the first essays of the artist are towards the acquirement of an art. But they are not to be confounded with those moral acts which flow from the character when developed and fixed.

3. The whole question depends on Aristotle's theory of the *ἔξις*, as related to *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια*. There can be no such thing, properly speaking, as a *δύναμις* τῆς ἀρετῆς. As we have before seen, a *δύναμις*, except it be merely physical, admits of contraries. And therefore in the case of moral action, there can only be an indefinite capacity of acting either this way or that, either well or ill, which is therefore equally a *δύναμις* of virtue and of vice. The *ἐνέργεια* in this case is determined by no intrinsic law of the *δύναμις*,—(ἀνάγκη ἕτερόν τι εἶναι τὸ κύριον, *loc. cit.*) but by the desire or the reason of the agent. The *ἐνέργεια*, however, is no longer indefinite, it has, at all events some sort of definiteness for good or bad. And by the principle of habit (*ἔθος*), which Aristotle seems to assume as an acknowledged law of human nature, the *ἐνέργεια* reacts upon the *δύναμις*, reproducing itself. Thus the *δύναμις* loses its indefiniteness, and passes into a definite tendency; it ceases to be a mere *δύναμις*, and becomes an *ἔξις*, that is to say, a formed and fixed character, capable only of producing a certain class of *ἐνέργειαι*. Briefly then, by the help of a few metaphysical terms, does Aristotle sum up his theory of the moral cha-

racter. Καὶ ἐνὶ δὴ λόγῳ ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων ἐνεργειῶν αἱ ἔξεις γίνονται. And it is quite consistent with his entire view of these metaphysical categories, that he defines virtue to be not on the one hand a δύναμις, else it would be merely physical, nor on the other hand a πάθος, (which is here equivalent to ἐνέργεια,) else it would be an isolated emotion,—but a sort of ἔξις. The ἔξις, or moral state, is on the farther side, so to speak, of the ἐνέργεια. It is the sum and result of them. If ἔξις be regarded as a sort of developed δύναμις, as a capacity acquired indeed and definite, but still only a capacity, it may naturally be contrasted with ἐνέργεια. Thus in the above quoted passage, *Eth.* I. vii. 13, διττῶς ταύτης λεγομένης means καθ' ἔξιν and καθ' ἐνέργειαν, as we may see by comparing VII. xii. 2, VIII. v. 1. From this point of view Aristotle says, that 'it is possible for a ἔξις to exist, without producing any good. But with regard to an ἐνέργεια, this is not possible.' I. viii. 9. On the other hand, however, the ἔξις is a fixed tendency to a certain class of actions, and if external circumstances do not forbid, will certainly produce these. The ἐνέργεια not only results in a ἔξις but also follows from it, and the test of the formation of a ἔξις is pleasure felt in acts resulting from it. (II. iii. 1.) When Aristotle says, that there is nothing human so abiding as the ἐνέργεια καθ' ἀρετήν—διὰ τὸ μάλιστα καὶ συνεχέστατα καταζῆν ἐν αὐταῖς τοὺς μακαρίους, he implies, of course, that these ἐνέργεια are bound together by the chain of a ἔξις, of which in his own phraseology they are the efficient, the formal, and the final cause. It is observable, that the phrase ἐνέργεια τῆς ἀρετῆς occurs only twice in the ethical treatise. (III. v. 1, X. iii. 1.) This is in accordance with the principle, that virtue cannot be regarded as a δύναμις. Therefore Aristotle seems to regard moral acts not so much as the development of a latent excellence, but rather as the development or action of our nature in accordance with a

law (*ἐνέργειαι κατ' ἀρετήν*). Virtue then comes in as a regulative, rather than as a primary idea, it is introduced as subordinate, though essential, to happiness.

When we meet phrases like this just mentioned, we translate them, most probably, into our own formulæ, into words belonging to our own moral and psychological systems. We speak of 'moral acts,' or 'virtuous activities,' or 'moral energies.' Thus we conceive of Aristotle's doctrine as amounting to this, that 'good acts produce good habits.' Practically, no doubt, his theory does come to this, and if our object in studying his theory be *οὐ γυνώσκεις ἀλλὰ πράξις*, no better or more useful principle could be deduced from it. But in so interpreting him, we really strip Aristotle of all his philosophy. When he spoke of *ἐνέργεια κατ' ἀρετήν*, a wide range of metaphysical associations accompanied the expression. He was bringing the mind and moral powers of man into the entire chain of nature, at one end of which was matter, and at the other end God. He had in his thoughts, that a moral *ἐνέργεια* was to the undeveloped capacities, as a flower to the seed, as a statue to the block, as the waking to the sleeping, as the finite to the undefined. And he yet further implied that this *ἐνέργεια* was no mere process or transition to something else, but contained its end in itself, and was desirable for its own sake. The distinctness of modern language, and the separation between the various spheres of modern thought, prevent us from reproducing in any one term all the various associations that attach to this formula of ancient philosophy. As said before, we must rather feel, than endeavour to express them.

Hitherto we have only alluded to those conceptions which *ἐνέργεια*, as a universal category, imported into Ethics. We have now to advert to those which necessarily accrue to it by reason of its introduction into this science. It is clear that a

psychical *ἐνέργεια* must be different from the same category exhibited in any external object. Life, the mind, the moral faculties, must have their 'existence in actuality' distinguished from their mere 'potentiality' by some special difference, not common to other existences. What is it that distinguishes vitality from the conditions of life, waking from sleeping, thought from the dormant faculties, moral action from the unevoked moral capacities? In all these contrasts there is no conception that nearer approaches towards summing up the distinction than that of 'consciousness.'

Viewed from without, or objectively, *ἐνέργεια* must mean an existence fully developed in itself, or an activity desirable for its own sake, so that the mind could contemplate it without seeing in it a means or a condition to anything beyond. But when taken subjectively, as being an *ἐνέργεια* of the mind itself, as existing not only *for* the mind but also *in* the mind, it acquires a new aspect and character. Henceforth it is not only the rounded whole, the self-ending activity, the blooming of something perfect, in the contemplation of which the mind could repose; but it is the mind itself called out into actuality. It springs out of the mind and ends in the mind. It is not only life, but the sense of life; not only waking, but the feeling of the powers; not only perception or thought, but a consciousness of one's own faculties as well as of the external object.

This conscious vitality of the life and the mind is not to be considered a permanent condition, but one that arises in us.<sup>36</sup> Oftenest it is like a thrill of joy, a momentary intuition. Were it abiding, if our mind were capable of a perpetual *ἐνέργεια*, we should be as God, who is *ἐνέργεια ἄνευ δυνάμεως*. But that which we attain to for a brief period gives us a glimpse of the

<sup>36</sup> *Εἰθ. IX. IX. 5. γίνεται καὶ οὐχ ὑπάρχει ὥστερ κτήμει τι.*

divine, and of the life of God.<sup>37</sup> 'The life of God is of a kind with those highest moods which with us last a brief space, it being impossible that they should be permanent, whereas with Him they are permanent, since His ever-present consciousness is pleasure itself. And it is because they are vivid states of consciousness that waking and perception and thought are the sweetest of all things, and in a secondary degree hope and memory.'

This passage seems of itself an almost sufficient answer to those who would argue, that Aristotle did not mean to imply consciousness in his definition of happiness. If our happiness, which is defined as *ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς*, gives us a conception of the blessedness of God, which is elsewhere defined as the 'thinking upon thought,' we can hardly escape the conclusion, that it is the deepest and most vivid consciousness in us that constitutes our happiness. The more this idea is followed out, the more completely will it be found applicable to the theory of Aristotle; the more will it justify his philosophy and be justified by it. But here it is necessary to confess, that in using the term 'consciousness' to express the chief import of *ἐνέργεια*, as applied to the mind and to the theory of happiness, we are using a distinct modern term, whereas the ancient one was indistinct; we are making explicit what was only implicit in Aristotle; we are rather applying to him a deduction from his principles than exactly representing them in their purest form. Aristotle never *says* 'consciousness,' though we see he meant it. But one of the peculiarities of his philosophy was the want of subjective formulæ, and a tendency to confuse the subjective and the objective together. About *ἐνέργεια* itself Aristotle is not consistent; sometimes he treats it purely as objective, separating the consciousness from it; as, for

<sup>37</sup> *Metaph.* XI. vii. 6. Διαγωγή δ' ἐστὶν ὅλα ἡ ἀρίστη μικρὸν χρόνον ἡμῶν· οὕτω γὰρ δεῖ ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν (ἡμῶν μὲν γὰρ ἀδύνατον) ἐπεὶ καὶ ἡδονὴ ἢ ἐνέρ-

γεια τοῦτου· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐγρήγορος αἰσθητοῖς νόησις ἡδιστον, ἐλπιδες δὲ καὶ μνήμαι διὰ ταῦτα.

instance, *Eth.* ix. ix. 9, ἔστι τι τὸ αἰσθανόμενον ὅτι ἐνεργοῦμεν. 'There is somewhat in us that takes cognizance of the exercise of our powers.' Again x. iv. 7, τελειοῖ τὴν ἐνέργειαν ἡ ἡδονὴ ὡς ἐπιγινόμενόν τι τέλος. 'Pleasure is a sort of super-added perfection, making perfect the exercise of our powers.' But this is at variance with his usual custom; for not only is pleasure defined in Book VII. (whether by Aristotle or Eudemos) as ἐνέργεια ἀνεμπόδιστος, but also happiness is universally defined as ἐνέργεια. And if we wish to see the term applied in an undeniably subjective way, we may look to *Eth.* ix. vii. 6. 'Ἡδεῖα δ' ἐστὶ τοῦ μὲν παρόντος ἡ ἐνέργεια, τοῦ δὲ μέλλοντος ἡ ἐλπίς, τοῦ δὲ γεγενημένου ἡ μνήμη, where we can hardly help translating, 'the actual consciousness of the present' as contrasted with 'the hope of the future,' and 'the memory of the past.' In a similar context, *De Memorid* i. 4, we find Τοῦ μὲν παρόντος αἰσθησις, κ.τ.λ.

In saying that the idea of 'consciousness' is implied in, and might almost always be taken to represent, Aristotle's Ethical application of ἐνέργεια, we need not overshoot the mark, and speak as if Aristotle made the Summum Bonum to consist in self-consciousness, or self-reflection; that would be giving far too much weight to the subjective side of the conception ἐνέργεια. Aristotle's theory rather comes to this, that the chief good for man is to be found in life itself. Life, according to his philosophy, is no means to anything ulterior; in the words of Goethe, 'Life itself is the end of life.' The very use of the term ἐνέργεια, as part of the definition of happiness, shows, as Aristotle tells us, that he regards the chief good as nothing external to man, but as existing in man and for man,—existing in the evocation, the vividness, and the fruition of man's own powers.<sup>38</sup> Let that be called out

<sup>38</sup> *Eth.* i. viii. 3. Ὅρθως δὲ καὶ ὅτι | τέλος, οὕτως γὰρ τῶν περὶ ψυχὴν  
πράξεις τῶς λέγονται καὶ ἐνεργεῖαι τὸ | ἀγαθὸν γίνεται καὶ οὐ τῶν ἐκτός.



into 'actuality' which is potential or latent in man, and happiness is the result. Avoiding then any overstrained application of the term 'consciousness,' and aiming rather at paraphrase than translation, it may be useful to notice one or two places in which the term *ἐνέργεια* occurs. *Eth.* I. x. 2. "Αρα γε καὶ ἔστιν εὐδαίμων τότε ἐπειδὴν ἀποθάνῃ; Ἡ τοῦτό γε παντελῶς ἄτοπον, ἄλλως τε καὶ τοῖς λέγουσιν ἡμῖν ἐνέργειάν τινά τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν; Is a man *then* happy, after he is dead? Or is not this altogether absurd, especially for us who call happiness a conscious state? I. x. 9. Κύριαί δ' εἰσὶν αἱ κατ' ἀρετὴν ἐνέργειαι τῆς εὐδαιμονίας. 'Happiness depends (not on fortune, but) on harmonious moods of mind.' I. x. 15. Τί οὖν κωλύει λέγειν εὐδαίμονα τὸν κατ' ἀρετὴν τελείαν ἐνεργοῦντα, κ.τ.λ. 'What hinders us calling him happy who is in possession of absolute peace and harmony of mind?' VII. xiv. 8. Διὸ ὁ Θεὸς αἰεὶ μίαν καὶ ἀπλὴν χαίρει ἡδονήν· οὐ γὰρ μόνον κινήσεως ἔστιν ἐνέργεια ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀκινήσεως. 'God is in the fruition of one pure pleasure everlastingly. For deep consciousness is possible, not only of motion, but also of repose.' IX. ix. 5. Μονῶτῃ μὲν οὖν χαλεπὸς ὁ βίος· οὐ γὰρ ῥᾶδιον καθ' αὐτὸν ἐνεργεῖν συνεχῶς, μεθ' ἑτέρων δὲ καὶ πρὸς ἄλλους ῥᾶον. 'Now to the solitary individual life is grievous; for it is not easy to maintain a glow of mind by one's self, but in company with some one else, and in relation to others, this is easier.'

The formula we are discussing is applied by Aristotle to express the nature both of pleasure and of happiness. By examining separately these two applications of the term, we shall not only gain a clearer conception of the import of *ἐνέργεια* itself, but also we shall be in a better position for seeing what were Aristotle's real views about happiness. 1. The great point that Aristotle insists upon with regard to pleasure is, that it is not *κίνησις* or *γένεσις*, but *ἐνέργεια*, (*Eth.* VII. xii. 3, X. iii. 4-5. X. iv. 2). What is the meaning

of the distinction? In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*<sup>39</sup> we find pleasure defined in exactly the terms here repudiated, namely, as 'a certain motion of the vital powers, and a settling down perceptibly and suddenly into one's proper nature, while pain is the contrary.' This definition is there given merely as a popular one, sufficient for the purposes of the orator, who does not require metaphysical exactness. It corresponds with that given in Plato's *Timæus*.<sup>40</sup> It seems to have been originally due to the Cyrenaics; for these are said to be referred to by Socrates in the *Philebus* of Plato (p. 53), under the name of 'a refined set of men (κομφοί τινες), who maintain that pleasure is always a state of becoming (γένεσις), and never a state of being (οὐσία)' (see above, p. 132). Now in all essential parts of their views on pleasure, Aristotle and Plato were quite agreed. Both would have said,<sup>41</sup> pleasure is not the chief good; both would have made a distinction between the bodily pleasures, which are preceded by desire and a sense of pain—and the mental pleasures, which are free from this; both would have asserted the pleasure of the philosopher to be higher than all other pleasures. The difference between them resolves itself into one of formulæ. Plato has no consistent formula to express pleasure, he calls it 'a return to one's natural state,' 'a becoming,' 'a filling up,' 'a transition.' But all these terms are only applicable to the bodily pleasures, preceded by a sense of want. Plato acknowledges that there are pleasures above these, but he seems to have no word to express them. Therefore he may be said to leave the stigma upon pleasure in general, that it is a mere state of transition. Aristotle here

<sup>39</sup> *Rhet.* I. xi. 1. 'Τροπείσθω δ' ἡμῖν εἶναι τὴν ἡδονὴν κίνησιν τινα τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ κατέστασιν ἀθρόαν καὶ αἰσθητὴν εἰς τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν φύσιν, λήπτῃ δὲ τούναντίον.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Plato, *Timæus*, p. 64. Τὸ μὲν

παρὰ φύσιν καὶ βλαπὸν γιγνόμενον ἀθρόον παρ' ἡμῖν πάθος ἀλγευνόν, τὸ δ' εἰς φύσιν ἄπῳ πάλιν ἀθρόον ἡδύ.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Plato, *Philebus*, p. 22, *Eth.* x. iii. 13.

steps in with his formula of *ἐνέργεια*, and says, pleasure is not a transition, but a fruition. It is not imperfect, but an End-in-itself. It does not arise from our coming to our natural state, but from our employing it.<sup>42</sup>

Kant<sup>43</sup> defines pleasure to be 'the sense of that which promotes life, pain of that which hinders it. Consequently,' he argues, 'every pleasure must be preceded by pain; pain is always the first. For what else would ensue upon a continued advancement of vital power, but a speedy death for joy? Moreover, no pleasure can follow immediately upon another; but between the one and the other, some pain must have place. It is the slight depressions of vitality, with intervening expansions of it, which together make up a healthy condition, which we erroneously take for a continuously-felt state of well-being; whereas, this condition consists only of pleasurable feelings, following each other by reciprocation, that is, with continually intervening pain. Pain is the stimulus of activity, and in activity we first become conscious of life; without it an inanimate state would ensue.' In these words the German philosopher seems almost exactly to have coincided with Plato. The 'sense of that which promotes life' answers to *ἀναπλήρωσις*, and Plato appears to have held, with Kant, the reciprocal action of pleasure and pain. (Cf. *Phædo*, p. 60.) Kant's views, like Plato's, are only applicable to the bodily sensations, and do not express pleasures of the mind.

Aristotle in defining pleasure as *ὁ τελειοῦ τὴν ἐνέργειαν*, makes it, not 'the sense of what promotes life,' but rather the sense of life itself; the sense of the vividness of the vital powers; the sense that any faculty whatsoever has met its

<sup>42</sup> *Eth.* vii. xii. 3. *Ὁ γινόμενον συμβαίνουσιν, ἀλλὰ χρωμένων.*

<sup>43</sup> Kant's *Anthropology*, p. 169. The above translation is given by Dr.

Badham in an Appendix to his edition of Plato's *Philebus*. London, 1855.

proper object. This definition then is equally applicable to the highest functions of the mind, as well as to the bodily organs. Even in the case of pleasure felt upon the supplying of a want, the Aristotelian<sup>44</sup> doctrine with regard to that pleasure was, that it was not identical with the supply, but contemporaneous; that it resulted from the play and action of vital powers not in a state of depression, *while* the depressed organs were receiving sustenance. To account for the fact that pleasure cannot be long maintained, Aristotle would not have said, like Kant, that we are unable to bear a continuous expansion of the vital powers; but rather, that we are unable to maintain the vivid action of the faculties.<sup>45</sup> Pleasure then according to Aristotle, proceeds rather from within than from without; it is the sense of existence; and it is so inseparably connected with the idea of life, that we cannot tell whether life is desired for the sake of pleasure, or pleasure for the sake of life.<sup>46</sup>

2. If happiness be defined as *ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς*, and pleasure as *ὁ τελειοῖ τὴν ἐνέργειαν*, what is the relation between them? Perhaps it is unfair to Aristotle to bring the different parts of his work thus into collision. Probably he worked out the treatise on Pleasure in Book X. without much regard to the theory of happiness, but merely availing himself of the formulæ which seemed most applicable. It is only in Book VII. (XIII. 2)—which we have seen reason to consider a later work, and the compilation of Eudemus,—that pleasure and happiness are

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Eth.* x. iii. 6. Οὐδ' ἐστὶν ἀρα ἀναπλήρωσις ἡ ἡδονή, ἀλλὰ γνωμένης μὲν ἀναπληρώσεως ἡδοιτ' ἂν τις. VII. xiv. 7. Δέγω δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ἡδέα τὰ λατρεύοντα· ὅτι γὰρ συμβαίνει λατρεύεσθαι τοῦ ὑπομένουτος ὕγιους πράττοντός τι, διὰ τοῦτο ἡδὺ δοκεῖ εἶναι, i.e. that it is the play, in some sort, of the undepressed vital func-

tions, while those that were depressed are being recruited.

<sup>45</sup> *Eth.* x. iv. 9. Πάντα γὰρ τὰ ἀνθρώπεια ἀδυνατεῖ συνεχῶς ἐνεργεῖν.

<sup>46</sup> *Eth.* x. iv. 11. Συνεχέεσθαι μὲν γὰρ ταῦτα φαίνεται κατ' χωρισμὸν οὐδέχασθαι ἀνευ τε γὰρ ἐνεργείας οὐ γίνεται ἡδονή, πᾶσάν τε ἐνέργειαν τελειοῖ ἡ ἡδονή.

brought together on the grounds that they both consist in 'the free play of conscious life' (ἐνέργεια ἀνεμπόδιστος). This is a carrying out of Aristotle's doctrine beyond what we find in Books I. and X.<sup>47</sup> Aristotle had prepared the way in these for the identification of happiness with the highest kind of pleasure, but had not himself arrived at it. However, we can find no other distinction in his theory between pleasure and happiness, than that the latter is something ideal and essentially moral (τέλος καὶ τέλειον πάντη πάντως), and extended over an entire life (λαβοῦσα μῆκος βίου τελείου), and implying the highest human excellence, the exercise of the highest faculties (ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια κατὰ τὴν κρατίστην ἀρετήν). We have before alluded to the ideal character of happiness as a whole. This is shown especially by the fact, that while on the one hand Aristotle says that happiness (ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς) must occupy a whole life, on the other hand he speaks of brevity of duration as necessarily attaching to every human ἐνέργεια. A δύναμις, he argues, is not only a δύναμις of being, but also a δύναμις of not-being. This contradiction always infects our ἐνέργειαι, and like a law of gravitation, this negative side is always tending to bring them to a stop. The heavenly bodies being divine and eternal, move perpetually and unweariedly,<sup>48</sup> for in them this law of contradiction does not exist. But to mortal creatures it is impossible to long maintain an ἐνέργεια,—that vividness of the faculties, on which joy and pleasure depend. Happiness then, as a permanent condition, is something ideal; Aristotle figures it as the whole of

<sup>47</sup> It is true that among the unphilosophical definitions of happiness given in the *Rhetoric*, I. v. 3, this occurs,—βίος μετ' ἀσφαλείας ἡδιστος. Not only is this unphilosophical, but also the *Rhetoric* may be considered later in conception than the *Ethics*.

<sup>48</sup> *Μεταφ.* VIII. viii. 18. Διὸ δὲ ἐνεργεῖ ἥλιος καὶ ἀστροὶ καὶ ὅλος ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ οὐ φοβερὸν μὴ ποτε στή, δ φοβούνται οἱ περὶ φύσεως. Οὐδὲ κἀμνεὶ τοῦτο δρῶντα· οὐ γὰρ περὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀντιφάσεως αὐτοῖς, οἶον τοῖς φθαρτοῖς, ἡ κίνησις.

life summed up into a vivid moment of consciousness; or again, as the aggregate of such moments with the intervals omitted; or again, that these moments are its essential part (τὸ κύριον μέρος τῆς εὐδαιμονίας), constituting the most blessed state of the internal life (ζωὴ μακαριωτάτη), while the framework for these will be the βίος αἰρετώτατος, or most favourable external career (*Eth.* ix. ix. 9). In what then do these moments consist? Chiefly in the sense of life and personality; in the higher kind of consciousness, which is above the mere physical sense of life. This is either coupled with a sense of the good and noble, as in the consciousness of good deeds done (*Eth.* ix. vii. 4); or it is awakened by friendship, by the sense of love and admiration for the goodness of a friend, who is, as it were, one's self and yet not one's self (*Eth.* ix. ix. 10); or finally it exists to the highest degree in the evocation of the reason, which is not only each man's proper self (*Eth.* ix. iv. 4, x. vii. 9), as forming the deepest ground of his consciousness, but is also something divine, and more than mortal in us.

III. Turning now to the consideration of *Μεσότης*, we shall see that it is only one application of this formula, to use it in reference to moral subjects; that it is indeed a most widely applicable philosophical idea, and has a definite history and development previous to Aristotle. It would seem not to require a very advanced state of philosophy in order for men to discover the maxim, that 'moderation is best,' that 'excess is to be avoided.' Thus as far back as Hesiod we find the praise of *μέτρια ἔργα*. The era of the Seven Sages produced the gnome, afterwards inscribed on the temple of Delphi, *Μηδὲν ἄγαν*. And one of the few sayings of Phocylides which remain, is *Πολλὰ μέσοισιν ἄριστα, μέσος θέλω ἐν πόλει εἶναι*. Now all that is contained in these popular and prudential sayings, is of course also contained in

the principle of *Μεσότης*, which is so conspicuous in the *Ethics* of Aristotle. But Aristotle's principle contains something more—it is not a mere application of the doctrine of moderation to the subject-matter of the various separate virtues. We see traces of a more profound source of the idea, in his reference to the verse *ἰσθλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἀπλῶς, παντοδαπῶς δὲ κακοί*. For here we are taken back to associations of the Pythagorean philosophy, and to the principle that evil is of the nature of the infinite and good of the finite.<sup>49</sup>

To say that what is infinite is evil, that what is finite is good, may seem an entire contradiction to our own ways of thinking. We speak of 'man's finite nature,' or of 'the infinite nature of God,' from a contrary point of view. But by 'finite' in such sentences we mean to express limitations of power, of goodness, of knowledge, each limitation implying an inferiority as compared with a nature in which such limitation does not exist. But the Pythagoreans were not dealing with this train of thought, when they said 'the finite is good.' They were expressing what was in the first place a truth of number, but afterwards was applied as a universal symbol; they were speaking of goodness in reference to their own minds. The 'finite' in number is the calculable, that<sup>50</sup> which the mind can grasp and handle; the 'infinite' is the incalculable, that which baffles the mind, that which refuses to reduce itself to law, and hence remains unknowable. The 'infinite' in this sense remained an object of aversion to the Pythagoreans, and hence in drawing out their double row of goods and evils, they placed 'the even' on the side of the bad,

<sup>49</sup> *Eth.* II. vi. 14. Τὸ γὰρ κακὸν τοῦ ἀπείρου ὡς οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι εἰκάζον, τὸ δ' ἀγαθὸν τοῦ πεπερασμένου.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Philolaus, apud Stob. *Ed.* *Phys.* I. xxi. 7. Καὶ πάντα γὰρ μὲν τὰ

γινωσκόμενα ἀριθμὸν ἔχοντι, οὐ γὰρ οὐδὲν οὔτε νοηθῆμεν οὔτε γνωσθῆμεν ἀνευ τούτου. Whether this fragment be genuine or not, it expresses the doctrine.

'the odd' on the side of the good. This itself might seem paradoxical, until we learn that with even numbers they associated the idea of infinite subdivision, and that even numbers added together fail to produce squares; while the series of the odd numbers if added together produces a series of squares; and the square by reason of its completeness and of the law which it exhibits, is evidently of the nature of the finite. The opposition of the finite and the infinite took root in Greek philosophy, and above all in the system of Plato. Unity and plurality, form and matter, genus and individuals, idea and phenomena, are all different modifications of this same opposition. The Pythagoreans themselves appear to have expressed or symbolized matter under the term τὸ ἄπειρον, and Plato<sup>51</sup> seems to have yet more distinctly conceived of this characteristic of matter or space, saying that it was an 'undefined duad,' that is, that it contained in itself an infinity in two directions, the infinitely small and the infinitely great.

Assuming therefore that the principle of the finite, or the limit (πεπερασμένον or πέρας), may be considered as identical with that of form or law, we may now proceed to notice what appears to be the transition from the idea of fixed law or form (εἶδος), to that of proportion or the mean (μεσότης), that is, to law or form become relative. It is to be found in the *Philebus* of Plato, p. 23—27. Socrates there divides all existence into four classes; first, the infinite (ἄπειρον); second, the limit (πέρας); third, things created and compounded out of the mixture of these two (ἐκ τούτων μικτὴν καὶ γεγενημένην οὐσίαν); fourth, the cause of this mixture and of the creation of things. The infinite is that class of things admitting of degrees, more or less, hotter and colder, quicker and slower,

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Ar. Metaphys.* I. vi. 6.



and the like, where no fixed notion of quantity has as yet come in. The limit is this fixed notion of quantity, as, for instance, the equal, or the double. The third or mixed class exhibits the law of the *πέρας* introduced into the *ἄπειρον*. Of this Socrates adduces beautiful manifestations. Thus in the human body the infinite is the tendency to extremes, to disorder, to disease, but the introduction of the limit here produces a balance of the constitution and health. In sounds you have the infinite degrees of deep and high, quick and slow, but the limit gives rise to modulation, and harmony, and all that is delightful in music. In climate and temperature, where the limit has been introduced, excessive heats and violent storms subside, and the mild and genial seasons in their order follow. In the human mind, 'the goddess of the limit' checks into submission the wild and wanton passions, and gives rise to all that is good.

Both in things physical and moral these two opposites, the finite and the infinite, are thus made to play into one another, and to be the joint causes of beauty and excellence. Out of their union an entire set of ideas and terms seem to spring up, symmetry, proportion, balance, harmony, moderation, and the like. And this train of associations seems to have been constantly present to the mind of Plato. It suited the essentially Greek character of his philosophy to dwell upon the goodness of beauty, and the beauty of goodness, on the morality of art, and the artistic nature of morality; so that words like *μετρίότης* and *συμμετρία* became naturally appropriated to express excellence in life and action.<sup>52</sup>

This Platonic principle, then, Aristotle seems to have taken up and adopted, slightly changing the formula, however, and

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *Republic*, p. 401. Ἔστι δέ | ὕφαντική καὶ ποικιλία καὶ οἰκοδομία  
γέ που πλήρης μὲν γραφικὴ αὐτῶν καὶ | καὶ πᾶσα αὖ ἡ τῶν ἄλλων σκεύων ἐρ-  
πᾶσα ἡ τοιαύτη δημιουργία, πλήρης δέ | γασία, ἐτι δὲ ἡ τῶν σωμάτων φύσις καὶ

speaking of μεσότης instead of μετρίότης. The reason for this change may have been, that the formula became thus more exact and more capable of a close analytic application to a variety of instances, and at the same time gave scope for expressing that which is with Aristotle the complement of the theory, namely the doctrine of extremes and their relation to the mean. Aristotle does not ignore the physical and artistic meanings of the principle. On the contrary, the whole bearing of his use of the term μεσότης is to show that moral virtue is only another expression of the same law which we see in nature and the arts. Life has been defined to be 'multeity in unity,' in other words, it is the law of the πείρας exhibited in the ἀπειρον. The first argument made use of by Aristotle to show that virtuous action consists in a balance between extremes, is drawn from the analogy of physical life; 'For about immaterial things,' he says, 'we must use material analogies.' 'Excess and deficiency equally destroy the health and strength, while what is proportionate (τὰ σύμμετρα) preserves and augments them' (*Eth.* II. ii. 6). Again, he points out that all art aims at the mean, and the finest works of art are those which seem to have realized a subtle grace which the least addition to any part or diminution from it would overset (*Eth.* II. vi. 9). 'And moral virtue,' he adds, 'is finer than the finest art.' But it is by a mathematical expression of the formula, by a reducing it to an absolutely quantitative conception, that Aristotle's use of Μεσότης is chiefly distinguished. He says, that all quantity, whether space or number (ἐν παντί δὴ συνεχεῖ καὶ διαιετῶ), admits of the terms more, less, and equal. Or making these terms relative, you have excess,

ἡ τῶν ἄλλων φύσιν· ἐν πᾶσι γὰρ τοῖς ἔρεσιν εὐσχημοσύνη ἢ ἀσχημοσύνη. καὶ ἡ μὲν ἀσχημοσύνη καὶ ἀρρυθμία καὶ ἀναρμοστία κακολογίας καὶ κακοθελίας

ἀδελφά, τὰ δ' ἐναντία τοῦ ἐναντίου, σώφρωνες τε καὶ ἀγαθοὶ ἦθους, ἀδελφά τε καὶ μιμήματα.

deficiency, and the mean. The mean, then, is in geometrical proportion, what the equal is in arithmetical progression. The middle term arithmetically is that which is equidistant from the terms on each side of it. Geometrically the mean is not an absolute mean, but a relative mean, that is, if applied to action, it expresses the consideration of persons and of circumstances (*Eth.* II. vi. 4—5). This opposition of the mean to the too much and too little, becomes henceforward a formula of almost universal application. It is no mere negative principle, not the mere avoiding of extremes, but rather the realization of a law. When Aristotle says that the *μεσότης* must be *ὁρισμένη λόγῳ*, he means that our action must correspond to the standard which exists in the rightly-ordered mind. What is subjectively the *λόγος*, law or standard, that is objectively the *μεσότης* or balance. 'Each of our senses,' says Aristotle, 'is a sort of balance (*μεσότης*) between extremes in the objects of sensation, and this it is which gives us the power of judging.'<sup>53</sup>

Thus again he says of plants, that they have no perceptions, 'because they have no standard' (*διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν μεσότητα*, *De An.* II. xii. 4). Again, he defines pleasure and pain to consist in 'the consciousness, by means of the discriminating faculty (*τῇ αἰσθητικῇ μεσότητι*) of the senses, of coming in contact with good or evil.'<sup>54</sup> Each of the senses then is, or contains, a sort of standard of its proper object. And it is clear that Aristotle attributes to us a similar critical faculty in regard of morals. He says, that 'It is peculiar to man, as compared with the other animals, that he has a sense

<sup>53</sup> *De Anima*, II. xi. 17. 'Ὡς τῆς αἰσθήσεως ὅλον μεσότητός τινος οὐσης τῆς ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς ἐναντιώσεως. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο κρίνει τὰ αἰσθητά. Τὸ γὰρ μέσον κριτικόν.

<sup>54</sup> Καὶ ἐστὶ τὸ ἡδεσθαι καὶ λυπεῖσθαι τὸ ἐνεργεῖν τῇ αἰσθητικῇ μεσότητι πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακόν, ἢ τοιαῦτα.—*De An.* III. vii. 2.

of good and bad, just and unjust.’<sup>55</sup> He seems to have regarded this ‘moral sense’ as analogous to the ‘musical ear,’ which in some degree is almost natural to all men, but again exists in very different degrees in different men, and also may be more or less cultivated. Thus (*Eth.* ix. ix. 6) he speaks of the good man being ‘pleased at good actions, as the musical man is at beautiful tunes.’ And in *Eth.* x. iii. 10, he says, that ‘It will be impossible to feel the pleasure of a just man if one is not just, as it will be to feel the pleasure of a musical man if one is not musical.’ In the *Ethics*, its proper objective sense is preserved to *Μεσότης*, which accordingly means a ‘balance,’ and not the ‘standard’ for determining that balance, which is expressed by the term *λόγος*. A moment’s consideration of this point will give an answer to the somewhat superficial question, Why does not Aristotle make the intellectual virtues mean states? In the original form of the principle of *Μεσότης* we have seen that it consisted in the introduction of the law of the *πέρας* into the *ἄπειρον*. The passions and desires are the infinite; moral virtue consists in introducing limit (*πέρας*) into them,—in bringing them under a law (*λόγῳ ὀρίζειν*)—in making them exhibit balance, proportion, harmony (*μεσότητα*), which is the realization of the law. On the other hand, reason (*ὁρθὸς λόγος*) is another name for the law itself. It is the standard, and therefore does not require to be regulated by the standard. The intellectual virtues are not *μεσότητες*, because they are *λόγοι*.

The worth and validity of Aristotle’s principle of the mean has been much canvassed and questioned. Kant has been very severe on Aristotle for making ‘a merely quantitative difference between vice and virtue.’ Some have thought the

<sup>55</sup> *Pol.* i. ii. 12. Τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς | μόνον ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ καὶ δικαίου καὶ  
τᾶλλα ἕφα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἴδιον, τὸ | ἀδίκου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων αἰσθησὶν ἔχειν.

theory practically true, but scientifically untenable; others on the contrary, that scientifically and abstractedly it is true, but that practically it gives an unworthy picture of morality, that it fails to represent the absolute and awful difference between right and wrong. Aristotle, himself, seems to have anticipated this last objection, by remarking<sup>56</sup> that 'It is only according to the most abstract and metaphysical conception, that virtue is a mean between vices, whereas, from a moral point of view it is an extreme, (i.e. utterly and extremely removed from them.)' Aristotle acknowledges that the formula of the mean does not adequately express the *good* of virtue, that when thinking of virtue under the category of good and regarding it as an object for the moral feelings and desires, as an object to be striven after, we should rather seek some other formula to express its nature. In the same way it might be said in accordance with modern views, that 'the mean' does not adequately express the *right* of virtue in relation to the will and conscience.

The objections to Aristotle's theory arise from a partial misconception of what the term *Μεσότης* really conveys. Kant for 'the mean' substitutes 'law.' But we have already traced the identity or correlation of *Λόγος* and *Μεσότης*, and we have seen that *Μεσότης* really implies and expresses exactly what is meant by 'law'—properly so-called. The only advantage which the term 'law' can have over *Μεσότης*, as an ethical principle, comes to it unfairly. For there is a sort of ambiguity between the two meanings of the word law; on the one hand it may denote a general principle, or harmony, or idea in nature; on the other hand an authoritative command of the state. In applying the word to morals the associations of both meanings are blended together, and 'the law of right' accordingly expresses not only something harmonious, the

<sup>56</sup> *Εθ.* II. vi. 17. Κατὰ μὲν τὴν | λέγοντα μεσότης ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετή, κατὰ  
οὐσίαν καὶ τὸν λόγον τὸν τί ἦν εἶναι | δὲ τὸ ἀριστον καὶ τὸ εὖ ἀκρότης.

attainment of an idea in action, but also there is a sort of association of authority conveyed, of the 'must,' of something binding on the will.

Supposing then we take the word 'law' or 'idea' as being the real representative of *Μεσότης*, it may still be asked whether a quantitative term be a fit and worthy expression for so deep a moral conception. The Pythagoreans would not have understood this objection. They thought numbers the most sublime and the only true expression for all that was good in the physical and moral world. They would have used in reference to number the exact counterpart of Wordsworth's praise of Duty—'And the most ancient heavens by thee are fresh and strong.' They would have delighted to say that virtue is a square and vice an uneven-sided figure. When we look to the arts, following the analogy that Aristotle pointed out, we see clearly how the whole of beauty seems from one point of view to depend on the more and the less. It does not derogate from a beautiful form, that more or less would spoil it. We still think of beauty as something positive, and that more or less would be the negations of this. By degrees, however, we come to figure to ourselves beauty rather as repelling the more and the less, than as being caused by them. The capacity for more and less is matter, the *ἄπειρον*, the *ἀόριστος δύας* of Plato. The idea coming in stamps itself upon this, we now have the harmonious and the beautiful, and all extremes and quantitative possibilities vanish out of sight. Matter is totally forgotten in our contemplation of form. So is it also with morals. We might fix our view upon the negative side of virtue, look at it in contrast to the extremes, and say it is constituted virtue by being a little more than vice and a little less than vice. But this would be to establish a positive idea out of the negation of its negations.

To look at anything in its elements, makes it appear inferior

to what it seems as a whole. Resolve the statue or the building into stone and the laws of proportion, and no worthy causes of the former beautiful result seem now left behind. So, also, resolve a virtuous act into the passions and some quantitative law, and it seems to be rather destroyed than analyzed; though, after all, what was there else that it could be resolved into? An act of bravery seems beautiful and noble; when we reduce this to a balance between the instincts of fear and self-confidence, the glory of it is gone. This is because the form is everything, and the matter nothing; and yet the form, without the matter as its exponent, has no existence. It is, no doubt, true that the beauty of that brave act would have been destroyed had the boldness of it been pushed into folly; and equally so had it been controlled into caution. The act, as it was done, exhibits the law of life, 'multeity in unity;' or, in other words, the law of beauty. This is, then, what the term *Μεσότης* is capable of expressing; it is the law of beauty. If virtue is harmony, grace, and beauty in action, *Μεσότης* perfectly expresses this.

That beauty constituted virtue, was an eminently Greek idea. If we run through Aristotle's list of the virtues, we find them all embodying this idea. The law of the *Μεσότης*, as exhibited in bravery, temperance, liberality, and magnanimity, constitutes a noble, free, and brilliant type of manhood. Extend it also, as Aristotle does, to certain qualifications of temper, speech, and manners, and you have before you the portrait of a graceful Grecian gentleman. The question now is, are there other virtues which exhibit some other law than this law of beauty, and to which, therefore, the *Μεσότης* would be inapplicable? Let us take as instances, truth, humility, charity, forgiveness of injuries, and ask what is the case with these. 'Truth' is treated of in a remarkable way by Aristotle; under this name he describes a certain straightforwardness of

manner, which he places as the mean between boastfulness and over-modesty. That deeper kind of truth which, as he says, is concerned with justice and injustice, he omits to treat of. When we come to his theory of justice—taking this as an individual virtue—we find it either imperfectly developed, or else imperfectly set forth. Now, truth itself, seems expressible under the law of the *Μεσότης*; it is a balance of reticence with candour, suitable to times and seasons. But the impulse to truth—the duty of not deceiving—the relation of the will to this virtue, seems something quite beyond the formula of the Mean.

So, also, with the other virtues specified; humility, charity, and forgiveness of injuries being Christian qualities, are not described by Aristotle; but if we ask if they are ‘mean states,’ we find that they are all beautiful; and, in so far as that, they all exhibit a certain grace and balance of the human feelings. There is a point at which each might be overstepped; humility must not be grovelling, nor charity weak; and forgiveness must at times give place to indignation. But there seems in them something which is also their chief characteristic, and which is beyond and different from this quality of the mean. Perhaps this might be expressed in all of them as ‘self-abnegation.’ Now, here, we get a different point of view from which to regard the virtues; and that is, the relation of Self, of the individual Will, of the moral Subject to the objective in the sphere of action. This point of view Aristotle’s principle does not touch. *Μεσότης* expresses the objective law of beauty in action, and as correlative with it the critical moral faculty in our minds, but the law of right in action as something binding on the moral subject it leaves unexpressed. To some extent this want is supplied by Aristotle’s doctrine of the *τέλος*, which raises a beautiful action into something absolute, and makes it the end of our being.



But still the theory of 'Duty' cannot be said to exist in Aristotle, and all that relates to the moral will is with him only in its infancy. *Μεσότης*, we have seen, expresses the beauty of good acts, but leaves something in the goodness of them unexpressed. In conclusion, we must remember that 'Ἀρετή with Aristotle did not mean quite the same as 'virtue' with us, he meant the excellence, or perfection of man, just as he spake elsewhere of the 'Ἀρετή of a horse. It is no wonder then that with his Greek views he resolved this into a sort of moral beauty.

IV. We have now traced the application of some of his leading philosophical forms in the *Ethics* of Aristotle. We have observed how he takes the same point of view in discussing man as in treating of nature in general. End, form, and actuality, are in human life, as in all nature, the good. If we look into the *Ethics* of Eudemus, and into those three books of his which are our only exposition of part of Aristotle's system, we see a carrying out of the same tendency, an effort to bring the psychology of the Will under some broader and more general law, and to express action and purpose under the form of a logical syllogism. It is uncertain how far this doctrine, even in its beginnings, is to be attributed to Aristotle himself. But it is worth a passing consideration. It is made the vehicle of some interesting discussions; and it shows not only the sort of advance made by the Peripatetic school, but also it lets us to know what was the nature of the psychology of the day. We have already observed that it is only in the Eudemian books of the *Ethics* that this formula occurs. But it is also set forth very explicitly in the treatise *De Motu Animalium* which has been placed among the works of Aristotle, but which is now generally considered spurious, and is in all probability a Peripatetic compendium.

For clearness sake, let us refer at once to the summary

account of the doctrine of the practical syllogism, which is given in the last-mentioned work.

The practical syllogism depends on this principle, that 'No creature moves or acts, except with a view to some end.'<sup>57</sup> What therefore the law of the so-called 'sufficient reason' is to a proposition of the understanding, that the law of the final cause is to an act of the will. 'Under what conditions of thought is it,'<sup>58</sup> asks the writer, 'that a person at one time acts, at another time does not act, at one time is put in motion, at another time not? It seems to be much the same case as with people thinking and reasoning about abstract matter, only *there* the ultimate thing to be obtained is an abstract proposition, for as soon as one has perceived the two premises, one perceives the conclusion. But here the conclusion that arises from the two premises is the action; as, for instance, when one has perceived, that Every man ought to walk, and I am a man, he walks immediately. Or again, that No man ought now to walk, and I am a man, he stops still immediately. Both these courses he adopts, provided he be neither hindered nor compelled. . . That the action is the conclusion, is plain; but the premisses of the practical syllogism are of two kinds, specifying either that something is good, or again, how it is possible.'<sup>59</sup> This then may shortly be said to be the form of the practical syllogism:

<sup>57</sup> Πάντα τὰ ζῷα καὶ κινεῖ καὶ κινεῖται ἕνεκά τινος, ὥστε τοῦτ' ἔστιν αὐτοῖς πρόθεσι τῆς κινήσεως πέρας τὸ οὐ ἕνεκα. — *De Mot. An.* vi. 2.

<sup>58</sup> *De Mot. An.* vii. 1. Πῶς δὲ νοῶν ὅτε μὲν πράττει ὅτε δ' οὐ πράττει, καὶ κινεῖται, ὅτε δ' οὐ κινεῖται; Ἔοικε παραπλησίως συμβαίνειν καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀκινήτων διανοουμένων καὶ συλλογισζομένων. Ἄλλ' ἐκεῖ μὲν θεώρημα τὸ τέλος (ὅταν γὰρ τὰς δύο προτάσεις

νόησιν, τὸ συμπέρασμα ἐνόησε καὶ συνέθηκεν,) ἐνταῦθα δ' ἐκ τῶν δύο προτάσεων τὸ συμπέρασμα γίγνεται ἢ πράξις, ὅλον ὅταν νόησιν ὅτι παντὶ βαδιστέον ἀνθρώπῳ, αὐτὸς δ' ἀνθρώπος, βαδίζει εὐθέως, ἂν δ' ὅτι οὐδενὶ βαδιστέον νῦν ἀνθρώπῳ, αὐτὸς δ' ἀνθρώπος, εὐθὺς ἡρεμεῖ καὶ ταῦτα ἀμφω πράττει, ἂν μὴ τι κωλῆν ἢ ἀναγκάσῃ.

<sup>59</sup> *De Mot. An.* vii. 4. Ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἢ πράξις τὸ συμπέρασμα, φανερόν· αἱ

either (1) Major Premiss. Such and such an action is universally good.

Minor Premiss. This will be an action of the kind.

Conclusion. Performance of the action.

or (2) Major Premiss. Such and such an end is desirable.

Minor. This step will conduce to the end.

Conclusion. Taking of the step.

In other words, every action implies a sense of a general principle, and the applying of that principle to a particular case; or again, it implies desire for some end, coupled with perception of the means necessary for attaining the end. These two different ways of stating the practical syllogism are in reality coincident; for assuming that all action is for some end, the major premiss may be said always to contain the statement of an end.<sup>60</sup> And again, any particular act, which is the application of a moral principle, may be said to be the means necessary to the realization of the principle. 'Temperance is good,' may be called either a general principle, or an expression of a desire for the habit of temperance. 'To abstain now will be temperate,' is an application of the principle, or again, it is the absolutely necessary means toward the attainment of the habit. For 'it is absurd,' as Aristotle tells us, 'when one acts unjustly to talk of not wishing to be unjust, or when one acts intemperately of not wishing to be intemperate.'<sup>61</sup>

The distinction between end and means which plays so important a part throughout the moral system of Aristotle, comes out, as might be expected, very prominently in Book

δὲ προτάσεις αἱ ποιητικαὶ διὰ δύο εἰδῶν γίνονται, διὰ τε τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ διὰ τοῦ δυνατοῦ.

<sup>60</sup> *Eth.* vi. xii. 10. Οἱ γὰρ συλλογισμοὶ τῶν πρακτῶν ἀρχὴν ἔχοντές

εἰσι, ἐπειδὴ τοιούδε τὸ τέλος καὶ τὸ ἀριστον.

<sup>61</sup> *Eth.* iii. v. 13. Ἐπὶ δ' ἀλογον τὸν ἀδικοῦντα μὴ βούλεσθαι ἀδικον εἶναι ἢ τὸν ἀκολασταίνοντα ἀκόλαστον.

III., where what must be called a sort of elementary psychology of the Will is given. But no application is there made of the scheme of the syllogism. Indeed a mathematical formula seems used in Book III, where a logical formula is in Book VI.: for in the former, the process of deliberation is compared to the analysis of a diagram (*Eth.* III. iii. 11); in the latter, error of deliberation is spoken of as a false syllogism, where the right end is attained by a wrong means, that is, by a false middle term.<sup>63</sup>

It is to Books VI. and VII. that we must look to see the use made of the practical syllogism. It is applied, first, to the explanation of the nature of Wisdom (*φρόνησις*), which is shown to contain a universal and a particular element.<sup>64</sup> 2. To show the intuitive character of moral judgments and knowledge.<sup>64</sup> 3. To prove the necessary and inseparable connexion of wisdom and virtue.<sup>65</sup> 4. In answer to the question, how is it possible to know the good, and yet act contrary to one's knowledge? In short, how is incontinence possible? This phenomenon is explained in two ways; either the incontinent man does not apply a minor premiss to his universal principle, and so the principle remains dormant, and his knowledge of the good remains merely implicit; or, again, desire constructs a sort of syllogism of its own, inconsistent with, though not directly contradictory to, the arguments of the moral reason.<sup>66</sup> Incontinence therefore implies knowing

<sup>63</sup> *Eth.* VI. ix. 5. 'Αλλ' ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦτου ψευδεῖ συλλογισμῷ τυχεῖν καὶ ὁ μὲν δεῖ ποιῆσαι τυχεῖν, δι' οὗ δ' οὐ, ἀλλὰ ψευδῇ τὸν μέσον ὅρον εἶναι.

<sup>64</sup> *Eth.* VI. vii. 7. Οὐδ' ἐστὶν ἡ φρόνησις τῶν καθόλου μόνον, ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα γινώσκειν, κ.τ.λ. VI. viii. 7. 'Ἐτι ἡ ἀμαρτία ἡ περὶ τὸ καθόλου ἐν τῷ βουλευσασθαι ἡ περὶ τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον ἡ γὰρ ὅτι πάντα τὰ βα-

ρύσταθμα ὕδατα φαῦλα, ἡ ὅτι τοῦ βαρύσταθμον.

<sup>64</sup> *Eth.* VI. xi. 4. Καὶ ὁ νοῦς τῶν ἐσχάτων ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρω, κ.τ.λ.

<sup>65</sup> *Eth.* VI. xii. 10. 'Ἐστὶ δ' ἡ φρόνησις—ἀρχὴς.

<sup>66</sup> *Eth.* VII. iii. 6. 'Ἐτι ἐπεὶ—οὐκ ἐνεργεῖ. VII. iii. 9, 10. 'Ἐτι καὶ ὁδε—κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

the good, and at the same time not knowing it. It would be impossible to act contrary to a complete syllogism which applied the knowledge of the good to a case in point; for the necessary conclusion to such a syllogism would be good action. But there is broken knowledge and moral obliviousness in the mind of the incontinent man, and the practical syllogism gives a formula for expressing this.

The foregoing references serve to show, that in itself this formula is only a way of stating certain psychological facts. The question whether people do really go through a syllogism in or before every action, is much like the question whether we always reason in syllogisms. Most reasonings seem to be from particular to particular, that is to say, by analogy; and yet some sort of universal conception, if it be only the sense of the uniformity of nature, lies at the bottom of all inference. And so too in action, most acts seem prompted by the instinct of the moment, and yet some general idea, as, for instance, the desire of the creature for its proper good, might be said to lie behind this instinct. This theory acknowledges<sup>87</sup> that the mind constantly passes over one of the premisses of the practical syllogism, as being obvious; that we act often instantaneously, without hesitation, just because we see an object of desire before us. Thus it is merely a way of putting it, to say that we act from a syllogism. But granting the formula, it becomes immediately a powerful analytic instrument. It seems to suggest and clear the way for a set of ulterior ques-

<sup>87</sup> *De Mot. An.* VII. iv. 5. "Ὅσπερ δὲ τῶν ἐρωτῶντων ἐνιοι, οὕτω τὴν ἐτέραυ πρότασιν τὴν δὴλην οὐδ' ἡ διάνοια ἐφιστάσα σκοπεῖ οὐδέν· ὡς εἰ τὸ βαδίζειν ἀγαθὸν ἀνθρώπῳ, ὅτι αὐτὸς ἀνθρώπος, οὐκ ἐνδιατρίβει. Διὸ καὶ ὅσα μὴ λογισάμενοι πράττομεν, ταχὺ πράττομεν. Ὅταν γὰρ ἐνεργήσῃ ἡ τῇ αἰ-

σθήσει πρὸς τὸ οὐ ἐνεκα ἢ τῇ φαντασίᾳ ἢ τῇ νῦν οὐ δρέγεται, εὐθὺς ποιεῖ· ἀντ' ἐρωτήσεως γὰρ ἢ νοήσεως ἢ τῆς δρέξεως γίνεται ἐνέργεια. Ποτέον μοι, ἢ ἐπιθυμία λέγει· τοδὶ δὲ ποτὸν, ἢ αἰσθησις εἶπεν ἢ ἡ φαντασία ἢ ὁ νοῦς· εὐθὺς πίνει.

tions, in which most important results would be involved. For now that action has been as it were caught, put to death, and dissected, and so reduced to the level of abstract reasoning, it seems that we have only to deal with its disjointed parts in order to know the whole theory of human Will. We have only to ask what is the nature of the major premiss, and how obtained? What is the nature of the minor premiss, and how obtained? The answer to these questions in the *Ethics* is not very explicit. This is exactly one of the points on which a conclusive theory seems to have been least arrived at. With regard to our possession of general principles of action, there appear to be three different accounts given in different places.

- (1) They are innate and intuitive (VI. xi. 4, VII. 6, 7).
- (2) They are evolved from experience of particulars (VI. viii. 6).
- (3) They depend on the moral character (VI. xii. 10, VII. viii. 4).

These three accounts are not however incompatible with one another. For as in explaining the origin of speculative principles (*Post. An.* II. 19) Aristotle seems to attribute them to reason as the cause and experience as the condition; so in regard to moral principles, we might say that they were perceived by an intuitive faculty, but under the condition of a certain bearing of the moral character, which itself arises out of and consists in particular moral experiences. This reconciliation of the statements is not made for us in the *Ethics*. There the different points of view stand apart, and there is something immature about the whole theory. So too with regard to the minor premiss in action; on the one hand we are told that it is a matter of perception (VI. viii. 9), as if it belonged to everybody; on the other hand we are told that the apprehension of these particulars is exactly what distinguishes the wise man.<sup>68</sup> But it is unnecessary to attempt to

<sup>68</sup> Πρακτικός γὰρ ὁ φρόνιμος τῶν γὰρ ἐσχατῶν τις. *Eth.* VII. ii. 5.

go beyond the lead of the *Ethics* in answering these questions, for we should ourselves most probably state them in an entirely different way.

We see in the practical syllogism a limited and imperfect attempt to graft on a logical formula upon Aristotle's system. We also see in it a still more important fact, namely, the progress of psychology, and the tendency now manifesting itself to give attention to the phenomena of the Will. The manner in which the theory is stated, abstractedly, and with a full belief in logical formulæ, rather than an appeal to life and consciousness,—shows something of the scholastic spirit. To reduce action to a syllogism dogmatically is a piece of scholasticism. Plato would have put it in this way for once, and would then have passed on to other modes of expression. But it is remarkable that this formula is one of those that remains most completely stamped upon the language of mankind. When we talk of 'acting on principle,' or speak of a man's 'principles,' ~~perhaps we do not reflect that this expression is a remnant of Aristotle's practical syllogism.~~ 'Principle' is no other than the ἀρχή or major premiss. There is however this difference, that while with the Peripatetics the major premiss contained the idea of a good to be desired for its own sake (τέλος), 'principle' often implies an expression of duty, that is to say, rather that which is right in itself, than that which is desirable in itself.

## ESSAY V.

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### *On the Physical and Theological Ideas in the Ethics of Aristotle.*

A RISTOTLE'S limited and separate mode of treating the problem which he has assigned to himself in this treatise, his exclusive adherence to an ethical (or, as he would call it, a political) point of view, and his rejection of many great questions<sup>1</sup> connected with the nature of man, because he conceived them to belong to other sciences, might seem to exonerate us from the task of discussing here his opinions on the gravest matters of all. But yet it is impossible that an ethical treatise should be written uncoloured by the writer's view of nature, the Deity, and the human soul. And accordingly we find more than one passage in this work of Aristotle which really depends on his views of those subjects. If then we make no attempt to understand parts of his philosophy that lie outside his *Ethics*, we shall not only miss that which in the mind of Aristotle must have been the setting of the whole piece, but also we shall be in danger of substituting our own point of view for his, and thus wrongly explaining many of his allusions. In the present Essay it may be useful to collect a few passages from the different works of Aristotle, which may throw light upon the general bearing of his mind, though it would be out of place, if indeed it were possible, to

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, the metaphysical question concerning the good, *Eth.* I. vi. 13. The question of Providence, I. ix. 3. The physical aspect of the question about friendship, VIII. i. 6, &c.



give anything like a dogmatic or explicit account of his opinions, with regard to many of which we are not in a position to form a certain estimate.

The most interesting notices of his general views of nature may be gathered from the second book of Aristotle's *Physical Lectures*. He there speaks of 'nature'<sup>3</sup> as 'a principle of motion and rest implanted and essentially inherent in things, whether that motion be locomotion, increase, decay, or alteration.' 'It is absurd<sup>3</sup> to try to prove the existence of nature; to do so would be to ignore the distinction between self-evident and not self-evident things.' 'Nature<sup>4</sup> may be said in one way to be the simplest and most deep-lying substratum of matter in things possessing their own principle of motion and change; in another way it may be called the form and law of such things.' That is, nature is both matter or potentiality, and form or actuality. It is also the transition from one to the other. 'Nature,<sup>5</sup> says Aristotle, 'spoken of as creation is the path to nature.' Again, 'Nature<sup>6</sup> is the end or final cause.' In relation to this system of causation, it remains to ask what place is to be assigned to chance or the fortuitous, to necessity and to reason? 'Some<sup>7</sup> deny the existence of chance altogether, saying that there is a definite cause for all things.' 'Others,<sup>8</sup> again, have gone so far as to

<sup>3</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. i. 2. 'Ὡς οὐσης φύσεως ἀρχῆς τινὸς καὶ αἰτίας τοῦ κινεῖσθαι καὶ ἡρεμεῖν ἐν ᾧ ὑπάρχει πρῶτως καθ' αὐτὸ καὶ μὴ κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

<sup>4</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. i. 4. 'Ὡς δ' ἐστὶν ἡ φύσις πειρᾶσθαι δεικνύναι, γελοῖον—οὐ δυναμένου κρίνειν ἐστὶ τὸ δι' αὐτὸ καὶ μὴ δι' αὐτὸ γινώσκον.

<sup>5</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. i. 8. 'Ἐνα μὲν οὖν τρόπον οὕτως ἡ φύσις λέγεται, ἡ πρώτη ἐκάστῳ ὑποκειμένη ὕλη τῶν ἔχοντων ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀρχὴν κινήσεως καὶ μεταβολῆς,

ἄλλον δὲ τρόπον ἡ μορφή καὶ τὸ εἶδος τὸ κατὰ τὸν λόγον.

<sup>6</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. i. 11. 'Ἐτι δ' ἡ φύσις ἡ λεγομένη ὡς γένεσις ὁδὸς ἐστὶν εἰς φύσιν.

<sup>7</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. iii. 8. 'Ἡ δὲ φύσις τέλος καὶ οὐ ἔνεκα.

<sup>8</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. iv. 2. 'Ἐνιοὶ γὰρ καὶ εἰ ἐστὶν ἡ μὴ ἀποροῦσιν· οὐδὲν γὰρ γίνεσθαι ἀπὸ τύχης φασίν, ἀλλὰ πάντων εἶναι τι αἰτίον ὀρισμένον.

<sup>9</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. iv. 5. Εἰσὶ δὲ τινες

assign the fortuitous as the cause of the existence of the heaven and the whole universe.' 'Others' believe in the existence of chance, but say that it is something mysterious and supernatural, which baffles the human understanding.' With none of these opinions does Aristotle seem exactly to agree. He will not hear of attributing the existence of 'the heaven'<sup>10</sup> and the divinest things that meet our eyes' to blind chance. Again, while allowing the existence of chance as an undefined or incalculable principle of causation, and awarding to it a certain sphere, namely, things contingent, he does not appear to have believed in anything supernatural attaching to it. He distinguishes 'the fortuitous' from 'chance,' considering 'chance' to be only a species of the latter, and restricted to the sphere of human actions.<sup>11</sup> As a proof of this he alleges that 'good fortune is held to be the same or nearly so with happiness;' now happiness is a kind of action, *i.e.* 'doing well.' Where there is no action, there is no chance. Hence no inanimate object, nor beast, nor child, does anything by chance, because it has no choice, nor have these either good or bad fortune, except metaphorically, in the same sense that Protarchus said 'the stones of the altar were fortunate, because they were honoured.' The fortuitous and chance both are merely accidental, and not essential principles of causation, they therefore presuppose the essential, since the accidental is posterior to and dependent on the essential. Therefore<sup>12</sup> of

οἱ καὶ τοῦρανοῦ τοῦδε καὶ τῶν κοσμικῶν πάντων αἰτιῶνται τὸ αὐτόματον.

<sup>9</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. iv. 8. Εἰσὶ δὲ τινες οἱς δοκεῖ εἶναι αἰτία μὲν ἡ τύχη, ἀδηλος δὲ ἀνθρωπίνῃ διανοίᾳ ὥς θεῖόν τι οὕσα καὶ δαιμονιώτερον.

<sup>10</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. iv. 6. Τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὰ θεῖατα τῶν φανερῶν.

<sup>11</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. vi. 1. Διὸ καὶ ἀνάγκη περὶ τὰ πρακτὰ εἶναι τὴν

τύχην· σημείον δ' ὅτι δοκεῖ ᾗτοι ταῦτόν εἶναι τῇ εὐδαιμονίᾳ ἢ εὐτυχίᾳ ἢ ἔργῳ, ἢ δ' εὐδαιμονία πρᾶξις τις· εὐπραγία γάρ. This passage was probably written previously to the *Ethical* researches of Aristotle.

<sup>12</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. vi. 8. Ὡς τὸτερον ἄρα τὸ αὐτόματον καὶ ἡ τύχη καὶ τοῦ καὶ φύσεως· ὥστ' εἰ ὅτι μάλιστα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ αἰτίων τὸ αὐτόματον, ἀνάγκη

whatever things chance may be the cause, it necessarily follows that nature and reason, which are essential causes, should be presupposed, that they should be in short the causes of the universe.

Has necessity, then, a conditional<sup>13</sup> or an absolute sway in relation to nature? To say that it had an absolute sway, would be equivalent to assigning as the cause of the existence of a wall that the heavy stones *must* be put at the bottom, and the light stones and earth a-top. In reality, however, this necessity in regard to the wall is only a necessary<sup>14</sup> condition, not a cause, of the making of the wall. Given a certain end, and certain means to this are necessary; thus far and no farther has necessity a sway in regard to nature. But the end is the real cause, the necessary means are a mere subordinate condition.

Lastly, What is the position of design or intelligence in relation to nature? Some reduce all nature to a mechanical principle; if they recognize any other principle at all (as Empedocles spoke of 'love and hatred,' and Anaxagoras of 'reason'), they just touch it and let it drop.<sup>15</sup> They say it rains, not that the corn may grow, but from a mechanical necessity, because the vapours are cooled as they are drawn up, and being cooled are compelled to fall again, and by coincidence this gives growth to the corn.<sup>16</sup> 'Why should it not also be by accident and coincidence, they ask, that in the teeth

πρότερον νοῦν καὶ φύσιν αἰτίαν εἶναι  
καὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν καὶ τοῦδε πάντος.

<sup>13</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. ix. 1. Τὸ δ' ἐξ  
ἀνάγκης πρότερον ἐξ ὑποθέσεως ὑπάρχει  
ἢ καὶ ἀπλῶς; Νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐκ οἴονται τὸ  
ἐξ ἀνάγκης εἶναι ἐν τῇ γενέσει, ὥσπερ  
ἂν εἰ τις τὸν τοῖχον ἐξ ἀνάγκης γεγενη-  
σθαι νομίζοι, ὅτι τὰ μὲν βαρέα κάτω  
πέφυκε φέρεσθαι τὰ δὲ κοῦφα ἐπιπολῆς.

<sup>14</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. ix. 2. Οὐκ ἀνευ μὲν  
τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἐχόντων τὴν φύσιν, οὐ  
μέντοι γε διὰ ταῦτα ἀλλ' ἢ ὡς ἔλην,  
ἀλλ' ἐνεκά του.

<sup>15</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. xiii. 1. Καὶ γὰρ  
ἐὰν ἄλλην αἰτίαν εἴπωσιν, ὅσον ἀψάμε-  
νοι χαίρειν ἐώσω, ὃ μὲν τὴν φιλίαν καὶ  
τὸ νείκος, ὃ δὲ τὸν νοῦν.

<sup>16</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. viii. 3.

of animals, for instance, the front teeth grow sharp and suitable for cutting, while the hind teeth grow broad and suitable for grinding?' Hence their theory is, that whenever blind necessity did not hit by coincidence on results as perfect as if they had been designed, its products perished, while the lucky hits were preserved; and thus Empedocles says that whole races of monsters perished<sup>17</sup> before a perfect man was attained.

Aristotle says, 'It is impossible that this theory can be true;<sup>18</sup> our whole idea of chance and coincidence is something irregular, out of the course of nature, while nature is the regular and the universal. If, then, the products of nature are either according to coincidence or design, it follows that they must be according to design. We see how a house is built; if that house were made by nature, it would be made in exactly the same way, *i.e.* with design, and according to a regular plan. The same adaptation of means to ends we see in the procedure of the animals, which makes some men doubt whether the spider, for instance, and the ant, do not work by the light of reason or an analogous faculty. In plants, moreover, manifest traces of a fit and wisely-planned organization appear. The swallow makes its nest and the spider its web by nature, and yet with a design and end; and the roots of the plant grow downwards and not upwards, for the sake of providing it nourishment in the best way. It is plain, then, that end and design is a cause of natural things. And if nature be figured both as matter and as end, we may surely regard the matter as a mere means to an end, and the end itself to be really and essentially the cause. The failures of nature, the abortions and monsters which Empedocles spoke of as if they were the normal products

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<sup>17</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. viii. 4. "Ὅσα δὲ μὴ οὕτως, ἀπώλετο καὶ ἀπόλλυται, καθάπερ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς λέγει τὰ βουγενῆ ἀνδρόπρωρα.

<sup>18</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. viii. 5—10.

of nature, are in reality its mere exceptions. They are mistakes and errors, exactly analogous to the failures in art. It is absurd to doubt the existence of design because we cannot see deliberation actually taking place. Art does not deliberate. If the art of ship-building were inherent in the wood, ship-building would be a work of nature. Perhaps the best conception we can have of nature is, if we think of a person acting as his own doctor and curing himself.<sup>19</sup>

On these views of Aristotle's several observations at once suggest themselves. They contain a recognition quite as strong as that in Paley's *Natural Theology* of the marks of design in creation. But we see that it is possible to recognize these marks of design, and to be led by them to a different view from that of Paley; that Aristotle does not discover in them, as it were, the works of a watch, and proceed immediately to infer the existence of a watchmaker; but rather that the products of nature appear to him according to the analogy of a watch that makes itself. If we ask, how it is that the watch makes itself? Aristotle would reply, that all things strive after the good; that on the idea of the good, as seen and desired, the whole heavens and all nature depend. Aristotle views the world with a kind of natural optimism. He says (*Eth.* i. ix. 5), 'All things in nature are constituted in the best possible way.' If we ask, what is it that perceives the good—what gives to nature this eye of reason to perceive an idea and to strive after it?—on this head Aristotle is not explicit. He says there is something divine in nature. 'Even<sup>20</sup> in the lower creatures there is a natural good above their own level, which strives after the good proper for them.'

<sup>19</sup> *Nat. Ausc.* II. viii. 15. Μάλιστα δὲ δῆλον ὅταν τις ἰατρῆν αὐτὸς ἐαυτὸν. τοῦτο γὰρ ἔοικεν ἡ φύσις.

<sup>20</sup> *Eth.* x. 2, 4. Ἴσως δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς

φάουλους ἐστὶ τι φυσικὸν ἀγαθὸν κρεῖττον ἢ καθ' αὐτά, ὃ ἐφίεται τοῦ οἰκείου ἀγαθοῦ. A similar doctrine is given in the Eudemian Book VII. xiii. 6.

We see the indistinctness of this phrase. He speaks of 'the natural good' striving after 'their proper good.' If it be said that Aristotle's theory is Pantheism, this would not be exactly true, for Aristotle does not identify God with nature, nor deprive Him of personality. But what the relation is of 'the divine' in nature to God, it must be confessed that Aristotle does not make clear. We only see that Aristotle, while tracing design, beauty, and harmony in the world, is not led to figure to himself God as the artist or architect of this fair order, but as standing in a different relation to it. If we ask, how can the beginning be accounted for, how did the watch begin to make itself? Aristotle would say, in looking back we do not find in the past merely the elements (*δύναμις*) of a watch, we find of necessity the idea and the actuality (*ἐνέργεια*) of the watch itself (see above, p. 189). A perfect watch must always precede the imperfect one. It is impossible to think of nature as having had a beginning. 'The universe is eternal' (*Eth.* III. iii. 3). 'The parts<sup>21</sup> may be regarded as changeable, but the whole cannot change, it is increate and indestructible' (*De Cælo*, I. 10).

X One of the most interesting points to notice in this part of the subject, is the way in which Aristotle regards man in relation to nature as a whole. His view appears to be twofold; on the one hand he regards man as a part of nature. He says<sup>22</sup> 'You may call a man the product of a man, or of the sun.' He looks at the principle of human life as belonging to the whole chain of organized existence. Man has much in common with the animals and the plants. On the other hand, he looks at the human reason and will as a principle of causa-

<sup>21</sup> "Ποτ' εἰ τὸ δλον σῶμα συνεχές ἐν ὅτε μὲν οὕτως ὅτε δ' ἐκείνως διατίθεται καὶ διακεκόσμηται, ἡ δὲ τοῦ δλον σύστασις ἐστὶ κόσμος καὶ οὐρανός, οὐκ ἂν ὁ κόσμος

γίγνοιτο καὶ φθείροιτο, ἀλλ' αἱ διαθέσεις αὐτοῦ.

<sup>22</sup> *Nat. Anec.* II. ii. 11. Ἄνθρωπος γὰρ ἄνθρωπον γεννᾷ καὶ ἥλιος.

tion, which is not part of nature, but distinct. 'Man,' he says, 'is the cause of his own actions.' Thus he classifies causation into 'nature, necessity, chance, and again reason and all that comes from man' (*Eth.* III. iii. 7). 'In art<sup>23</sup> and in action the efficient cause rests with the maker or doer, and not as in nature with the thing done.' Aristotle's Ethical theory depends on this principle, that the moral qualities are not by nature, *i.e.* self-caused, but produced in us in accordance with the law of our nature, by the exercise of will, by care, cultivation, and in short the use of the proper means. We have already observed (see above, p. 107) that one of the first steps of Grecian Ethics, as exhibited in the philosophy of Archelaus and Democritus, consisted in severing man and human society from the general framework of nature. This Aristotle follows out in his *Ethics*, and he seems so easily to content himself with the practical assumption of freedom for man, as to give a narrow and unphilosophical appearance to part of his writing.

While, however, assuming freedom for human actions, Aristotle seems to do so, not so much from a sense of the deep importance of morality, but rather from an idea of the slightness of man and of his actions in comparison with nature, and what he would call the 'diviner parts' of the universe. There is a strange passage in his *Metaphysics* (XI. x. 2—3), which is obscure indeed, but it seems to bear on the question. He says,<sup>24</sup> 'All things are in some sort ordered and harmonized together, fishes of the sea, birds of the air, and plants that

<sup>23</sup> *Eth.* VI. iv. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Πάντα δὲ συντέτακται πως, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁμοίως, καὶ πλῆθι καὶ πτῆνη καὶ φυτά· ἀλλ' οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει ὥστε μὴ εἶναι θατέρῳ πρὸς θατέρῳ μῆθέν, ἀλλ' ἐστὶ τι. Πρὸς μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἅπαντα συντέτακται, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν οἰκίᾳ τοῖς

ἐλευθέροις ἡκίστα ἔξεσται ὃ τι ἔτυχεν ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἢ τὰ πλείιστα τέτακται, τοῖς δὲ ἀνδραπύδοις καὶ τοῖς θηρίοις μικρὸν τὸ εἰς τὸ κοῖνον, τὸ δὲ πόλυ ὃ τι ἔτυχεν· τοιαύτη γὰρ ἐκάστου ἀρχὴ αὐτῶν ἢ φύσις ἐστίν.

grow, though not in an equal degree. It is not true to say that there is no relation between one thing and another; there is such a relation. All things are indeed arranged together towards one common centre; but as in a household the masters are by no means at liberty to do what they please, but most things, if not all, are appointed for them, while the slaves and the dogs and cats do but little towards the common weal, and mostly follow their own fancies. For so the nature of each of the different classes prompts them to act.' This curious metaphor seems to represent the universe as a household. The sun and stars and all the heaven are the gentlemen and ladies, whose higher aims and more important positions in life, prevent any time being left to a merely arbitrary disposal; all is filled up with a round of the noblest duties and occupations. Other parts of the universe are like the inferior members of the family, the slaves and domestic animals, who for most part of the day can sleep in the sun, and pursue their own devices. Under this last category, it seems almost as if man would be here ranked. Aristotle does not regard the unchanging and perpetual motion of the heavenly bodies as a bondage, but rather as a harmonized and blessed life. All that is arbitrary (*ὡς ἔτυχε*) in the human will Aristotle does not consider a privilege. And man (especially in regard of his actions, the object of *φρόνησις* and *πολιτική*) he does not think the highest part of the universe; he thinks the sun and stars<sup>35</sup> 'far more divine.' This opinion is no doubt connected with a philosophical feeling of the inferiority of the sphere of the contingent, in which action consists, and with which chance intermixes, to the sphere of the absolute and the eternal. In this feeling Plato shared, but in Plato's mind there was set against it, what Aristotle seems deficient in, a

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<sup>35</sup> *Eth.* vi. vii. 4.



deep sense of the even eternal import of morality. To the heavenly bodies both Plato and Aristotle appear to have attributed consciousness, which explains in some degree the sayings of Aristotle. We see, however, that there was necessarily something peculiar, contrasted with our views, in the way Aristotle approached Ethics. This no doubt his actual researches in Ethics led him to modify. But he never would have accepted the saying, 'In the world there is nothing great but man; in man there is nothing great but mind'—and as we may surely go on to add, 'in mind there is nothing great but what is moral.'

We can never, perhaps, adequately comprehend Aristotle's philosophical conception of the Deity. The expression of his views that has come down to us, seems so incomplete, and contains so much that is apparently contradictory, that we are in great danger of doing Aristotle injustice. Even had we a fuller and clearer expression, there might be yet something behind this remaining unexpressed, as an intuition in the mind of the philosopher. The first thing we may notice is Aristotle's idea of 'Theology' as a science. In classifying the speculative sciences, he says (*Metaphys.* x. vii. 7), 'Physics are concerned with things that have a principle of motion in themselves; mathematics speculate on permanent, but not transcendental and self-existent things; and there is another science separate from these two, which treats of that which is immutable and transcendental, if indeed there exists such a substance, as we shall endeavour to show that there does. This transcendental and permanent substance, if it exists at all, must surely be the sphere of the divine, it must be the first and highest principle. Hence it follows that there are three kinds of speculative science, physics, mathematics, and theology.' In the same strain he speaks in the succeeding book (*Metaphys.* xi. viii. 19), as if the popular polytheism of

Greece were a mere perverted fragment of this deeper and truer 'Theology,' which he conceives to have been, in all probability, perfected often before in the infinite lapse of time, and then again lost. He says,<sup>26</sup> 'The tradition has come down from very ancient times, being left in a mythical garb to succeeding generations, that these (the heavens) are gods, and that the divine embraces the whole of nature. And round this idea other mythical statements have been agglomerated with a view to influencing the vulgar, and for political and moral expediency; as, for instance, they feign that these gods have human shape and are like certain of the animals; and other stories of the kind are added on. Now, if any one will separate from all this the first point alone—namely, that they thought the first and deepest grounds of existence to be gods, he may consider it a divine utterance. In all probability, every art and science and philosophy has been over and over again discovered to the farthest extent possible, and then again lost, and one may conceive these opinions to have been preserved to us as a sort of fragment of those lost philosophies. We see then to some extent the relation of the popular belief to those ancient opinions.' Aristotle having thus penetrated to a conception, which he imagined to lie behind the external and unessential forms of the Grecian religion, that is, the conception of a deep and divine ground

<sup>26</sup> Παραδέδοται δὲ παρὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων καὶ παμπάλαιον ἐν μύθου σχήματι καταλειμμένα τοῖς ὑστερον ὅτι θεοὶ τέ εἰσιν οὗτοι καὶ περιέχει τὸ θεῖον τὴν ὅλην φύσιν. Τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ μυθικῶς ἤδη προσήκται πρὸς τὴν πειθῶ τῶν πολλῶν καὶ πρὸς τὴν εἰς τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὸ συμφέρον χρῆσιν· ἀνθρωποειδεῖς τε γὰρ τούτους καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζώων ὁμοίους τισι λέγουσι, καὶ τούτους ἕτερα ἀκόλουθα καὶ παραπλήσια τοῖς εἰρημένους. "Ὅν

εἰ τις χωρίσας αὐτὸ λάβοι μόνον τὸ πρῶτον ὅτι θεοὺς φῶντο τὰς πρώτας οὐσίας εἶναι, θεῖους ἂν εἰρῆσθαι νομίσειεν, καὶ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς πολλάκις εὐρημένης εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν ἐκάστης καὶ τέχνης καὶ φιλοσοφίας καὶ πάλιν φθειρομένων καὶ ταύτας τὰς δόξας ἐκείνων οἷον λείψανα περισεσῶσθαι μέχρι τοῦ νῦν. Ἡ μὲν οὖν πάτριος δόξα καὶ ἡ παρὰ τῶν πρώτων ἐπὶ τοσούτων ἡμῶν φανερά μόνον.

for all existence, proceeds now to develop it for himself, and in doing so, he lays down the following positions (*Metaphys.* XI. vi.—x.).

(1) It is necessary to conceive an eternal immutable existence, an actuality prior to all potentiality. According to this view all notions of the world having sprung out of chaos must be abandoned. God is here represented as the eternal, unchangeable form of the whole, immaterial (*ἀνευ δυνάμεως*), and free from all relation to time.

(2) With this idea it is necessary to couple that of the source of motion, else we shall have merely a principle of immobility. We must therefore conceive of a ceaseless motion; this motion must be circular, no mere figure of philosophy,<sup>27</sup> but actually taking place. Thus the highest heaven with its revolutions must be looked on as eternal. In this we make a transition to the world of time and space. The succession of seasons and years flows everlastingly from the motion of the circumference of the heavens. It would seem as if we were thus attributing local and material conditions to the Deity himself, if we say that God moves the world by moving the circumference of the heaven. But here, again, Aristotle is saved from this conclusion by merging physical ideas into metaphysical. He says 'The mover<sup>28</sup> of all things moves them without being moved, being an eternal substance and actuality, and he moves all things in the following way:—the object of reason and of desire, though unmoved, is the cause of motion.'

(3) God has been thus represented as the cause of all things by being the object of contemplation and desire to nature and the world. In this doctrine, as before mentioned,

<sup>27</sup> Καὶ ἐστὶ τι δεῖ κινούμενον κίνησιν | οὐ λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλ' ἔργῳ δῆλον.  
ἄπαυστον αὐτῇ δ' ἡ κύκλῳ· καὶ τοῦτο

<sup>28</sup> See above, p. 172, note.

there is something unexplained; for to attribute thought and rational desire, as well as the power of motion to nature, seems really to place the Deity in nature as a thinking subject, as well as outside nature in the form of the object of thought and wish. Aristotle, however, does not explicitly do so; in relation to nature he seems to represent God only as an object, and he now passes on to depict God in relation to Himself as a subject, as a personal being, possessing in Himself conscious<sup>29</sup> happiness of the most exalted kind, such as we can frame but an indistinct notion of, by the analogy of our own highest and most blessed moods. This happiness is everlasting, and God 'has or rather is' continuous and eternal life and duration.<sup>30</sup>

(4) Aristotle next reverts to the impersonal view of God, and asks whether these principles are one or manifold? Whether there be one highest heaven or more than one? He concludes that there can be one only, for multitude implies matter, and the highest idea or form of the world must be absolutely immaterial.<sup>31</sup>

(5) But again, figuring to ourselves God as thought; on what does that thought think? Thought thinking upon nothing is a contradiction in terms; thought with an external object is determined by that object. But God as the supremest and best cannot be altered or determined by an external object. With God object and subject are one; the thought of God is the thinking upon thought.<sup>32</sup>

(6) Lastly, how is the supreme good of the world to be

<sup>29</sup> See above, p. 194, note.

<sup>30</sup> *Metaphys.* XI. vii. 9. Καὶ ζῶν δὲ γὰρ ὑπάρχει· ἡ γὰρ τοῦ ἐνέργεια ζῶν, ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἡ ἐνέργεια· ἐνέργεια δὲ ἡ καθ' αὐτὴν ἐκείνου ζῶν ἀρίστη καὶ αἰδώς. φανερὸν δὲ τὸν θεὸν εἶναι ζῶν αἰδώς ἀδίων ἀρίστον, ὥστε ζῶν καὶ αἰὼν συνεχὴς καὶ

αἰδώς ὑπάρχει τῷ θεῷ. τοῦτο γὰρ θεός.

<sup>31</sup> *Metaphys.* XI. viii. 18. Τὸ δὲ τί ἢν εἶναι οὐκ ἔχει ὕλην τὸ πρῶτον· ἐντελέχεια γάρ.

<sup>32</sup> *Metaphys.* XI. ix. 4. Αὐτὸν ἄρα νοεῖ, εἴπερ ἐστὶ τὸ κρᾶτιστον· καὶ ἐστὶν ἡ νόησις νοήσεως νόησις.

represented—whether as existing apart from the world, like the general of an army, or as inherent in the world, like the discipline of an army?<sup>33</sup> In other words, are we to hold that the Deity is immanent or transcendent? Aristotle gives no direct answer to this question, but seems to say that God must be conceived of both ways, just as the army implies both discipline and general, and the discipline is for the sake of the general. In these speculations we see an attempt made by Aristotle to approach from various sides the metaphysical aspect of the existence of the Deity. All metaphysical views of God are entirely foreign to most minds. The profound difficulty of them may be appreciated, if we set before ourselves this question, for instance, If the Deity be immaterial, how can He act upon a material universe? Aristotle does not appear to make any endeavour to obtain a complete view, or to reconcile the contradictions between his different statements,—between the impersonal view of God as the chief good and object of desire to the world, and the personal view of Him as a thinking subject. He acknowledges these two sides to the conception, ‘the discipline in the army’ and ‘the general ruling the army,’ but does not attempt to bring them together.

In the *Ethics* there are several popular and exoteric allusions to ‘the gods,’ as, for instance, that ‘It would be absurd to praise the gods’ (I. xii. 3); ‘The gods and one’s parents one cannot fully requite, one must honour them as much as possible’ (IX. ii. 8), &c. There are also some traces of Aristotle’s thoughts as a metaphysician; for instance, he speaks of ‘the

<sup>33</sup> *Μεταφυσ.* XI. x. i. Ἐπισκεπτόν δὲ καὶ ποτέρως ἔχει ἡ τοῦ θλου φύσις τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἄριστον, πότερον κεχωρισμένον τι καὶ αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτό, ἢ τὴν τάξιν, ἢ ἀμφοτέρως ὥσπερ

στράτευμα. Καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῇ τάξει τὸ εἶ καὶ ὁ στρατηγός, καὶ μᾶλλον οὗτος—οὐ γὰρ οὗτος διὰ τὴν τάξιν ἀλλ’ ἐκείνη διὰ τούτων ἐστίν.

good under the category substance,' being 'God and reason' (i. vi. 3). And he gives an elaborate argument (x. viii. 7) to demonstrate that speculative thought and the exercise of the philosophic consciousness, is the only human quality that can be attributed to the Deity. In this argument it is observable that he first begins by speaking of 'the gods,' saying 'We conceive of the gods as especially blessed and happy. What actions can we attribute to them? whether those of justice? but it would be absurd to think of their buying and selling,' &c. He then argues that 'If life be assigned to them, and all action, and still more, all production, be taken away, what remains but speculation.' And he concludes, 'The life of God then, far exceeding in blessedness, can be nothing else than a life of contemplation.' Thus he reverts to a monotheistic form of speaking, though he says again afterwards 'The gods have all their life happy, man's life is so, in as far as it has some resemblance to the divine consciousness of thought.' This passage then contains a sort of transition from exoteric to philosophical views. Aristotle attributes to 'the gods' that same mode of existence, which in his own metaphysical system he attributed to God, according to the deepest conception that he had formed of Him.<sup>34</sup> It is true, however, that in assigning speculative thought to the Deity, there is no mention made of the distinction which exists between the thought of the philosopher where object is distinct from subject, and the thought of God in which subject and object are one.

The passage to which we are referring in the *Ethics* contains not only a positive assertion with regard to the nature

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<sup>34</sup> The same point of view is maintained in the Eudemian Book, vii. xiv. 8. 'Hence God enjoys ever one and the same pleasure; that is, the deep consciousness of immutability.'

of God, but also a negative one. It asserts that all moral virtue is unworthy of being attributed to God. This, as we have before noticed (see above, p. 164), was a total departure from the view of Plato. Still more opposed is this view of Aristotle's to modern ideas. We feel that however great may be the metaphysical problems about the nature of God, the deepest conception of Him that we can attain to is a moral one. In this respect there is not only a great weakness in Aristotle's 'Theology,' that it is so exclusively metaphysical, but also his ethical system suffers from this depression of all that we should call morality below philosophical speculation. This is one of the points which will most strikingly remind us that we are reading a Greek treatise of the 4th century B.C. It appears to be connected with the tendency in Aristotle before mentioned, to consider human actions as slight and insignificant. By his doctrine of the moral *τέλος*, this tendency was in some degree counteracted; but it still remained, and it breaks out prominently in the passage just quoted.

There are yet two other passages in the *Ethics* where theological considerations are entertained. These are both connected with the question of a divine providence for and care of men. The first is where it is asked (*Eth.* I. ix. 1) whether happiness comes by divine allotment (*κατὰ τινα θεῖαν μοῖραν*) or by human means. The second is where the philosopher is spoken of (x. viii. 13) as being most under the favour of God (*θειοφιλέστατος*). With regard to Aristotle's general views of the question of providence, it is often argued that he must have denied its existence, inasmuch as he attributes no objective thought to God. But Aristotle does not himself argue this way; when the question comes before him, he does not appeal to his own *à priori* principle, and pronounce con-

trary to the general belief—rather he declines to pronounce at all. In the former of the two passages mentioned, he says, ‘One would suppose that if anything were the gift of God to men, happiness would be so, as it is the best of human things. But the question belongs to another science. Happiness, if not sent by God, but acquired by human means, seems at all events something divine and blessed.’ The latter part of this argument partly seems to be a setting-aside of the question, partly to be a sort of reconciliation of the existence of a providence (*θεῖόν τι*) with the law of cause and effect. In the second passage Aristotle repeats from Plato the assertion that the philosopher is under the favour of heaven (*θεοφιλέστατος*). He says, ‘If there is any care of human things by the gods, as there is thought to be (*ὥσπερ δοκεῖ*), we may conclude that they take pleasure in the highest and best thing, reason, which is most akin to themselves, and do good to those who cherish and honour it.’ In these words there may possibly be an esoteric sense, meaning that the philosopher in the exercise of his thought realizes something divine. Aristotle may imply that the popular doctrine of providence admits a deeper explanation, but he by no means here or elsewhere denies it. Nor can we presume to tell what Aristotle would include in his conception of the subject-object thought of God. As we saw before, he is not explicit as to the relation of God to nature, neither is he as to the relation of God to man. There is a passage of the *Ethics* which we may quote in conclusion, and which seems to convey a sense of the remote and inscrutable nature of God. Aristotle is arguing (*Eth.* ix. iv. 4) on the dearness to each man of his own personality. He says, ‘No one would sacrifice this to gain all the world. It would not then be *oneself* that made the gain, no more than one possesses now the chief good, because the Deity possesses it,



being whatever he is—' i.e. being something far removed from us and 'past finding out.'<sup>35</sup>

If we ask now, What were Aristotle's opinions as to the nature of the human soul, as far as they influenced his Ethics; we are met at once by a difficulty. For the Aristotelian word *ψυχή* does not exactly correspond with our word soul. It implies both more and less. More, as having on one side, at all events, a directly physical connexion; less, as not in itself implying any religious associations.

We cannot translate *ψυχή* 'vital principle,' because though it is this, it is also a great deal beside; nor 'mind,' because this would leave out as much at the one end as the former translation did at the other. In short, we cannot *translate* *ψυχή* at all, we can only see what Aristotle meant by it. He meant (advancing, as he shows us, upon the more or less indistinct views of his predecessors)—he meant in the first place to conceive of the *ψυχή* as a vital principle manifesting itself<sup>36</sup> in an ascending scale through vegetable, animal, and human life. To this scale of life Aristotle appeals in the *Ethics* (I. vii. 10—12). He there argues that man must have some proper function. 'This cannot be mere life in its lowest form, i.e. vegetable; nor again merely sensational, i.e. animal life; there remains therefore the moral and rational life.' From this point of view man is regarded as part of the chain of nature. Aristotle doubts, but on the whole concludes, that the *ψυχή* is the proper subject of physical science.<sup>37</sup> This he justifies by the fact<sup>38</sup> that the psychical phenomena, anger,

<sup>35</sup> Ἐκαστος δ' ἐαυτῷ βούλεται τὰ γαθὰ, γενόμενος δ' ἄλλος οὐδεὶς αἰρεῖται πάντ' ἔχειν ἐκεῖνο τὸ γενόμενον· ἔχει γὰρ καὶ νῦν ὁ θεὸς τὰ γαθόν, ἀλλ' ὧν ὁ τι ποτ' ἐστίν.

<sup>36</sup> *De Animā*, II. iv. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *De Animā*, I. i. 18.

<sup>38</sup> *De Animā*, I. i. 11. Φαίνεται δὲ τῶν πλείστων οὐθὲν ἀνευ σώματος πάσχειν οὐδὲ ποιεῖν, οἷον ὀργίζεσθαι, θαρβεῖν, ἐπιθυμεῖν, ὅλως αἰσθάνεσθαι. Cf. I. i. 15. τὰ πάθη λόγοι ἐνυλοὶ εἰσιν.

desire, and the like, are inseparable from the body, and from material conditions. Reason itself, if dependent on conceptions derived from the sense (μη ἄνευ φαντασίας), will fall under the same head. Following out this direction of thought, Aristotle defines the ψυχὴ to be 'The<sup>39</sup> simplest actuality of a physical body, which potentially possesses life, that is, of an organic body.' Of the meaning of the word ἐντελέχεια, used here, we have spoken above (see p. 184); the whole of this definition we see accords with Aristotle's physical philosophy in general, which conceived great and beautiful results coming out of physical conditions, not by any mechanical system of causation, rather that these ends necessitated the means; the whole was prior to and necessitated the parts. The ψυχή, says Aristotle, is to the body as form to matter,<sup>40</sup> as the impression to the wax, as sight to the eye. It is the essential idea of the body (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι τῷ τοιῷδὲ σώματι). It is as the master<sup>41</sup> to the slave, as the artist to the instrument. It is the efficient, the final, and the formal cause of the body. It is impossible to treat of the ψυχὴ without taking account of the body; 'as to the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls, they might as well speak of the carpenter's art clothing itself in flutes. For a soul<sup>42</sup> can no more clothe itself in a foreign body, than an art can employ the instruments of some foreign art.' While maintaining this close connexion between the ψυχὴ and the body, as between end and means, Aristotle was kept aloof by the whole tenour of his philosophy from anything like materialism. He sums up this part of his reasonings in the following words. 'That the

<sup>39</sup> *De Animā*, II. i. 5. Διὸ ψυχὴ ἐστὶν ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρώτη σώματος φυσικοῦ δυνάμει ζωῆς ἔχουτος. Τοιοῦτο δέ, ὃ ἂν ᾖ ὀργανικόν.

<sup>40</sup> *De Animā*, II. i. 7.

<sup>41</sup> *Εὐθ.* VIII. xi. 6.

<sup>42</sup> *De Animā*, I. iii. 26. Παραπλήσιον δὲ λέγουσιν ὥσπερ εἰ τις φαίη τὴν τεκτονικὴν εἰς αὐλοῦς ἐνδύεσθαι· δεῖ γὰρ τὴν μὲν τέχνην χρῆσθαι τοῖς ὀργάνοις, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν τῷ σώματι.

ψυχῇ, therefore, is inseparable from the body is clear, or at all events some of its parts, if it be divisible. Nothing,<sup>43</sup> however, hinders that some of its parts may be separable from the body, as not being actualities of the body at all. Moreover, it is not certain whether the ψυχῇ be not the actuality of the body in the same way that the sailor is of the boat.'

Here then is the point at which the interest in Aristotle's conception of the ψυχῇ begins for us. As long as the soul is described as bearing the relation to the body of sight to the eye, of a flower to the seed, of the impression to the wax, we may be content to consider this a piece of ancient physical philosophy. Our interest is different when the soul is said to be related to the body, 'as a sailor to his boat.' But here is the point also where Aristotle becomes less explicit. Having once mooted this comparison, he does not follow it up. The only further intimations of his opinion that he affords us, are to be found in the places where he speaks of 'those parts of the ψυχῇ which are not actualities of the body at all.' A striking notice on this subject is to be found in his treatise *De Generatione Animalium*<sup>44</sup> (II. iii. 10), where he argues that 'The reason alone enters in from without, and is alone divine; for the realization of the bodily conditions contributes nothing to the realization of its existence.' We have had before a contradictory point of view to this, in the saying that 'Reason may be looked on as dependent on conceptions derived from the senses,' which is also elsewhere repeated. But this contradiction is reconciled in Aristotle's account of the two modes of reason, the receptive or passive (νοῦς παθητικός), and the

<sup>43</sup> *De Anima*, II. I. 12. Οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' ἐνὰ γε οὐθέν κωλύει, διὰ τὸ μη-  
θενὸς εἶναι σώματος ἐντελεχείας. Ἐτι  
δὲ ἄδηλον εἰ οὕτως ἐντελέχεια τοῦ σώ-  
ματος ἢ ψυχῇ ὥσπερ πλωτὴρ πλοίου.

<sup>44</sup> Λέγεται δὲ τὸν νοῦν μόνον θείον  
θεν ἐπεισεῖναι καὶ θεῖον εἶναι μόνον·  
οὐθέν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ κοινωνεῖ  
σωματικὴ ἐνέργεια.

creative or active (νοῦς ποιητικός). 'These two modes, he says, it is necessary should be opposed to each other, as matter is opposed everywhere to form, and to all that gives the form. The receptive reason,<sup>46</sup> which is as matter, becomes all things by receiving their forms. The creative reason gives existence to all things, as light calls colour into being. The creative reason transcends the body, being capable of separation from it, and from all things; it is an everlasting existence, incapable of being mingled with matter, or affected by it; prior and subsequent to the individual mind. The receptive reason is necessary to individual thought, but it is perishable, and by its decay all memory, and therefore individuality, is lost to the higher and immortal reason.'

In the *Ethics* this distinction between the creative and the receptive reason (which, were this the place for it, might be made the subject of much discussion) is not kept up. The reason is there spoken of in its entirety, as containing in itself the synthesis of the two opposite modes. It is spoken of as constituting in the deepest sense the personality of the individual.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, it is spoken of as something divine, and akin to the nature of God.<sup>47</sup> The evocation of this into consciousness, constitutes what Aristotle calls 'the divine' in happiness; it gives us, according to him, a momentary glimpse of the ever-blessed life of God.

If we were to follow out logically the consequences of the

<sup>46</sup> *De An.* III. v. 2. Καὶ ἐστὶν ὁ μὲν τοιοῦτος νοῦς τῷ πάντα γίνεσθαι, ὁ δὲ τῷ πάντα ποιεῖν, ὡς ἔξισ τις, οἷον τὸ φῶς· τρόπον γὰρ τινα καὶ τὸ φῶς ποιεῖ τὰ δυνάμει ὄντα χρώματα ἐνεργείᾳ χρώματα. Καὶ οὗτος ὁ νοῦς χωριστὸς καὶ ἀπαθὴς καὶ ἀμικρὸς τῇ οὐσίᾳ ὡς ἐνεργείᾳ.—Ἡ κατὰ δύναμιν (ἐπιστήμη) προτέρα ἐν τῷ ἐνί, ὅλως δὲ οὐ χρόνῳ·

ἀλλ' οὐχ ὅτε μὲν νοεῖ ὅτε δ' οὐ νοεῖ. Χωρισθεὶς δ' ἐστὶ μόνον τοῦθ' ὑπερ- ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦτο μόνον ἀθάνατον καὶ αἰδίων. οὐ μνημονεύομεν δέ, ὅτι τοῦτο μὲν ἀπαθὴς, ὁ δὲ παθητικὸς νοῦς φθα- ρτός, καὶ ἄνευ τούτου οὐθὲν νοεῖ.

<sup>46</sup> *Eth.* IX. iv. 4, X. vii. 9.

<sup>47</sup> *Eth.* X. viii. 13.

above-mentioned doctrine of the two modes of the reason, we should come to the conclusion that, while Aristotle held the eternity of the universal reason, it would be impossible for him to hold what is really meant by the immortality of the soul. For the only immortal part in us is one which is impersonal, bearing the same relation to individuality as light to colours, being incapable of even receiving any impressions. But we do not find in Aristotle anything like such a logical application of the doctrine. Aristotle still leaves on record the saying, 'It is hard to pronounce whether the soul be not related to the body, as a sailor is to his boat.' While he thus avoids dogmatism, he seems to decline entering on the question. Though the treatise *De Animâ* is incomplete, yet we may well be surprised that it neither touches, nor shows any indication of an intention to touch, upon Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul. With Plato the grounds of this doctrine were in the last resort moral; they amounted to a kind of faith. With this sort of grounds Aristotle does not seem to consider it his province to deal. In the *Ethics*, while there is no direct contradiction of the doctrine, yet the whole system of morals is one that is irrespective of the doctrine, and uninfluenced by it. Aristotle's discussion of the gnome of Solon (*Eth.* I. 10) exhibits some remarkable peculiarities. He first asks 'Can Solon have meant by this that "a man is happy when he has died?"' and replies, 'This would be utterly absurd, especially since we consider happiness to be an actuality.' The assertion here is merely summary and dogmatic, where there might have been an elaborate argument. For does it follow that the *εὐεργεια* which constitutes happiness is so entirely dependent on the body as not possibly to exist without it? How, if the sailor at death were to step out of his boat? Again, according to Aristotle's own view, the higher reason is an immortal *εὐεργεια*,—What is the relation

of this to personality and happiness? Aristotle further on is led to revert again to the state after death, and to ask is one safe after death from the influence of the vicissitudes of fortune. Allowing, as a concession to popular feeling, that the dead may be affected by the fortunes of the living, he argues that the effect on them must be at any rate so small as not really to influence their happiness or unhappiness, and he reminds us, in conclusion,<sup>48</sup> of the extreme doubtfulness as to whether the dead do share at all in the interests of this world. Aristotle, while conceding for a moment the popular point of view, pictures the dead as shadowy existences, just as if in some Homeric Hades. There is evidently no philosophic earnestness about his mention of the subject, though he avoids all dogmatism and all ungracious expression of opinions. Other notices in the *Ethics*, such as that 'Death seems the boundary of all things, with no good or evil beyond it' (*Eth.* III. vi. 6), 'We often wish for what is impossible, as for instance, immortality' (*Eth.* III. ii. 7), are too slight and unscientific to bear upon the question. Nothing that Aristotle says of man's moral nature, seems to have any connexion with the idea of a future life. His doctrine of the End-in-itself seems indeed rather to supersede such an idea; it does not contradict it, but rather absorbs all thought of time and space, of present and future in itself, as being the absolute.

Thus in his interesting picture of the death of the brave man (*Eth.* III. ix. 4), Aristotle represents him as consciously quitting a happy life—he does not represent him as buoyed up by the hope of future fame, or a reward in heaven,—but as attaining there and then to an End-in-itself. This ideal doctrine, which sets the mind above all circumstances, and even above death, constitutes a merit and a defect in the system of

<sup>48</sup> *Eth.* I. xi. 4; see notes on this passage in Vol. II.

2 Aristotle. Its merit is the discernment of the absolute ideas of the inner consciousness. Its defect is, as we have before observed (see p. 164), that it is tinged with philosophic pride; that it is a doctrine for the few and not for the many. Closely connected with his apparent limitation of morality to the present life, is his opinion that 'Moral virtue is unworthy of being attributed to God.' This view gives to the moral system of Aristotle a restricted and even shallow appearance, as compared with Plato and with modern times.

## ESSAY VI.

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### *On the Relation of Aristotle's Ethics to Modern Systems.*

TO trace fully the historical relations of Aristotle's *Ethics* forwards as well as backwards, would imply first an examination of the Stoical system to see how in it the Ethical idea was developed. Then we should require to consider broadly the action of Christianity upon the philosophic thought of the world; to trace in the Alexandrian schools the mingling of various elements, and to ask what in the thought of these schools was lasting and germinant, and what was only temporary and isolated. We should have to observe the condition of philosophy within the pale of the Church itself, to notice the awakening of the question of free-will in connexion with the heresy of Pelagius; to see how Aristotle, at first excommunicated and kept aloof by the Church, was afterwards received for the sake of his method, and then almost incorporated with Christianity; to see, how when he was now taken up, his point of view had been lost, and how, accordingly, Aristotle's words were used to set forth the point of view of the schoolmen; how his logical, metaphysical, and ethical formulæ became stamped upon the language of the world; how at the revival of learning there was a reaction against the garbled Aristotelian philosophy of the schoolmen, which indiscriminately fell upon Aristotle himself; how in Bacon and Descartes modern philosophy took a fresh start with two divergent but highly fruitful and important tendencies; how Ethics also began anew quite independently of ancient philosophy, with a fresh problem and a deeper eye. We should



find Ethics now predominated over by two pervading and all-important conceptions, the product of ten centuries of theology, —namely, the will of God, and the will of man. We should see how the first speculative Ethics of modern times in the persons of Spinoza and Leibnitz essayed to fix the relation to each other of these two conceptions, by the attainment of some higher conception in which they might both be solved; how the freedom of the will was pertinaciously, but less philosophically, re-asserted by Cudworth; how in the eighteenth century a smaller question was mooted, one, however, that was quite distinct from the ancient Ethical point of view, —namely, the ground of action, whether selfishness or utility, or an internal so-called authoritative principle—conscience or the moral sense; how this was variously argued, not on a metaphysical but a psychological basis, by Hobbes, Cudworth, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Butler, Mandeville, Adam Smith, Hume, and Paley; how Kant taking up the question endeavoured to throw aside, as unworthy, all external motives and inducements to right action, and to reduce all to the idea of duty, existing as an *a priori* law of the will.

It is obvious that to fill up the outline which we have here merely indicated, would require, not an Essay, but a Volume. At the same time it would be writing the history, not of Aristotle's *Ethics*, but of modern moral philosophy. All we need at present is to make it felt, that between the point from which Aristotle started in writing his *Ethics*, and that from which any thinker of the present day or of the last two centuries would commence,—a great interval is set, an interval too, full of powerful influences, during which the whole spirit of the world has been changed. The influence of Aristotle himself is no doubt one of those that has worked upon the history of our thought, but only as one influence among many. It would then be an utter ignoring of facts and of the growth

of the human mind if we were to try to read Aristotle's book merely as if it were a modern treatise, or to set him side by side with some modern writer and to ask, Does Aristotle agree with Bishop Butler (for instance) on this or that question, without having first recognized the essential difference in their points of view.

Perhaps the simplest way to set this difference in its strongest light will be to take some modern system, and place an outline of its contents in comparison and in contrast with Aristotle. Let us take, for instance, Dugald Stewart's *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man* as being not deeply speculative and original, but at the same time able, clear, and learned, and therefore representing fairly the general run of modern Ethical science. Dugald Stewart, at the commencement of this work, proposes to begin with an analysis of the 'active propensities' of men, 'on account of the intimate relation which this analysis bears to the theory of morals, and its practical connexion with our opinions on the duties and the happiness of human life. Indeed,' says Dugald Stewart, 'it is in this way alone that the light of nature enables us to form any reasonable conclusions concerning the ends and destination of our being, and the purposes for which we were sent into the world: *Quid sumus et quidnam victuri gignimur*. It forms, therefore, a necessary introduction to the science of Ethics, or rather is the foundation on which that science rests.'

This passage set forth its writer's view of the method of Ethics, also of their matter or contents. The method, then, of Ethics, according to Dugald Stewart, is entirely psychological; our only source of knowledge consists in an analysis of 'the active propensities' of the human mind. This is very different from the procedure of Aristotle, who establishes his leading principle for Ethics, his conception of the practical

chief good, long before he commences any psychological divisions. It is true, indeed, that Aristotle gave the first impulse to psychology, but it was all wavering and tentative with him, and never harmonized into a completed system. In one place you have the division of the *ψυχὴ* into rational, irrational, and semi-rational (*μετέχον λόγου*); at another place a division into *δύναμις*, *πάθος*, *ἔξις*; then a psychology of the will with the distinctions of *βούλησις*, *βούλευσις*, and *προαίρεσις*; then a psychology of the intellect, and the divisions of art, science, wisdom, reason, and philosophy. These different analyses of the mind stand apart from one another. It would be, then, totally at variance with Aristotle's point of view to found Ethics upon a classification of the 'propensities' in the mind of an individual. He does not take this subjective view; he rather says 'the end for the state and the individual are the same.'

The object of this psychological analysis is, according to Dugald Stewart, that we may 'form reasonable conclusions concerning the ends and destination of our being, and the purposes for which we were sent into the world.' In speaking of the 'ends of our being,' it is observable that he makes use of an Aristotelian formula, and we might accordingly suppose that the problem of Ethics was the same with him as with Aristotle, namely, What is the final cause of action? But by the addition he makes of 'the purposes for which we were sent into the world,' he shows what a different thing with him 'the ends and destination of our being' is from the *τέλος* of Aristotle. It is obvious that in Dugald Stewart the conception is a religious, rather than a philosophical one. He means that psychology should point out to us the designs of God, in order that when we know them we may be able to fulfil them. The end, according to him, is something existing rather for the mind of God than for the mind of man. It conveys here

no sense of the absolute, of that which is in and for itself desirable, of the chief good, of the sum of all means. Whatever the conception has gained in earnestness owing to its religious application, it has lost in philosophic depth. By the addition also of the word 'destination,' it would almost seem as if Dugald Stewart went off altogether from the Aristotelian sense of the term 'end' into another association—that of ultimate issue or termination. This view would place the Ethical 'end' entirely outside of the present life, and it would make the problem for Ethics to consist in asking what is to be our lot in the life to come. It is not to be asserted that Dugald Stewart would clearly and definitely have thus identified Ethics with religion. What is to be remarked rather is, the indefiniteness of his view, and the way in which unconsciously he suffers it to be mixed up with theology.

In following out the method he has proposed to himself, Dugald Stewart classifies the 'Active Principles' of man as follows:—1. Appetites; 2. Desires; 3. Affections; 4. Self-love; 5. The Moral Faculty. The three first he calls 'Instinctive or Implanted Propensities;' the two last 'Rational and Governing Principles of Action.' After enumerating the appetites, he proceeds to classify the desires, and it may surprise us to find that he gives the following list of original and elementary desires. The desire of knowledge—of society—of esteem—of power—of superiority. He subdivides the affections into love of kindred—friendship—patriotism—pity to the distressed, and resentment, 'with various other angry affections grafted upon it.' In these lists it is easy to see that no very profound point of view is taken. The writer seems to content himself with an empirical and superficial arrangement. It could scarcely be shown that there is an absolute and primary distinction between the desire of society on the one hand, and love of kindred, friendship, and patriotism

on the other. The account, then, of these different propensities is not to be looked at as in the least philosophical, it is only as a sort of psychological diversion. The real point of importance in the whole discussion is not the nature or number of these subordinate, or, as Dugald Stewart calls them, 'instinctive,' propensities,—but to show that how many and whatsoever they be, they are under the control of 'the two rational and governing principles,' self-love and the moral faculty. The writer shows that self-love, or a prudential regard to our own happiness is not inconsistent with virtue. He establishes more by quotation than argument the existence of a supreme moral faculty, and bases moral obligation to do right upon the authority of this faculty.

We have taken this outline of moral science from Dugald Stewart, because it is by him stated dogmatically, and with the utmost clearness,—as far as clearness is possible in a theory where the conceptions are arbitrarily, rather than naturally, distinguished from each other. But every one will recognize in it a reproduction of Bishop Butler's system. Only certain details are more worked out; there is a more broad, though an arbitrary, separation between self-love and the moral faculty than Bishop Butler had made; and, instead of the laborious course of a close argument we have a foregone conclusion. Butler, indeed, may be regarded as the parent of a certain family of modern moral systems. Let us briefly advert to some points which suggest themselves, on a comparison of the bearing of these systems with the *Ethics* of Aristotle.

We have already pointed out the psychological method of modern Ethics, as constituting a difference from the procedure of Aristotle. The causes of this difference lie very deep. If the thought of Plato and Aristotle was 'conscious,' as compared with that of the Seven Sages, the thought of modern times might be called 'self-conscious,' as compared with theirs.

In morals, we find Aristotle dealing profoundly with those conceptions that form the *object* of moral action, the good or happiness, and the beautiful or virtue. But with regard to the *subjective* side of these conceptions—the moral *subject*—the relation of the ‘me,’ of the will and consciousness of the individual, to the good in life and action,—his theory seems not equally complete. Now, it is this subjective side of morals which, in modern times, has assumed a paramount importance. Duty, right, moral obligation—all these conceptions imply bringing home an act to the innermost consciousness. They are all dependent on the relation of the moral subject to the outer world. In modern systems, man is no longer depicted as capable of realizing the absolute, the supreme End-in-itself, by means of noble actions and moments of philosophic thought. The spirit of the world seems deeper and sadder, and the good and the joy of life are no longer its predominant conceptions. Individual will, and therefore individual responsibility, are now the first thoughts of Ethics. It is no more a question of happiness, or, as with Aristotle, what is the chief good? but, rather, what constitutes duty? why is anything right, and why are we obliged to do the right?

It is true that we find scattered through the *Ethics* of Aristotle, applications of the formula τὸ δεῖν, ὡς δεῖ, &c. Perhaps the most striking use of this term occurs *Eth.* III. i. 24, where it is argued that all desires cannot be involuntary, because there are some things one *ought* to desire (ἀπορρον δὲ ἴσως τὸ ἀκούσια φάναι ὧν δεῖ ὀφείσθαι). This implies the connexion between duty or responsibility and the freedom of the will. But the conception contained in this argument is not developed by Aristotle, as it might have been, systematically. It is a human instinct to say, ‘We ought (δεῖ) to do some things;’ but all that is contained in this word, ‘ought,’ had not been made explicit in the time of Aristotle, and cer-

tainly it was as yet by no means a leading conception. The foundation of the Ethical notion of duty is partly owing to the Stoics; but, undoubtedly, the whole idea of moral obligation and individual responsibility, which goes to make up its full significance, has taken hold of the thought of mankind through, and by reason of, the long influence of religion and theology. This deep conception is now an heir-loom of moral philosophers, they cannot get rid of it, any more than a man can return to the unconsciousness of a child. The inheritance, then, of this conception forms the first great difference between modern Ethical philosophers and Aristotle. However comparatively feeble may be the individual thought of any modern thinker, there is yet a sort of background to his system provided by the spirit of the age; a conception which he cannot help availing himself of, which, through no merit of his own, is on the whole deeper than anything which Aristotle had attained to. In modern times the system, or parts of the system, are often far greater than the individual thinker.

The question of Ethics, which has most exercised and divided the moderns, is one that in Aristotle's day had never been mooted, namely, Why are we obliged to do any particular right action instead of its contrary? The answers to this question are virtually only two. The assignable reasons reduce themselves, in short, to (1) utility, (2) duty. Against those who assigned utility as the ground of moral obligation, it was urged, that the idea of utility could never give rise to the idea of obligation. To this Paley replied that, you must take into your calculation of utility, some account of the consequences in another world, that is to say, of the rewards and punishments appointed by God. This fuller notion of utility, he argued, would completely explain all that was meant by obligation. In Bishop Butler's sermons a wavering account seems to be given. The inducements to right action are partly eu-

dæmonistic—it being urged that virtue is for our interest even in this life, and how much more for our interest in case there be rewards and punishments hereafter—partly they appeal to the authority of conscience. Only, what is the exact nature of conscience; how it pronounces; whether it be infallible; what is its relation to the will and the reason; and many other difficulties that might be started, Bishop Butler leaves unexplained.

In these specimens of eighteenth-century Ethics, we may see how little a philosophical point of view was maintained or even aimed at. Why should not Paley have taken his stand on the inherent desire for the good, inalienable from every creature, and which *obliges* it to pursue the course most conducive to the good? Why should not Butler, if he perceived so strongly the existence in us of this authoritative principle taking cognizance of the right, have been content to develop its nature, and to base all inducement to action upon obedience to its mandates? Even though Aristotle himself was occasionally prone to empiricism, and to falling away from the highest point of view, yet we feel that in his principle of the chief good and of the end, there is something philosophical, which we utterly miss in the views above mentioned. If Aristotle could possibly ever have had the question of moral obligation put before him, we can fancy how much more great and penetrating would have been the answer given. Turning from these English divines, who were most excellent writers but not profound philosophers, to the German thinker, Kant, we find in him no lack of endeavour to maintain a philosophical point of view. He at once discards all external inducements to action, reduces virtue to a state of the will, and the law of action to an *a priori* mandate of the will itself. It is true, that in carrying out this system, Kant is led into certain inconsistencies. He is unable to give his *a priori* law of duty any content, without



going to experience, and asking what will be the effect if such and such a course of action were to become universal? He seems also to think that the idea of a future life is necessary to supplement the morality of this present world, a view which is a little inconsistent with his former discarding of all notions of happiness, or of external reward for virtue. In spite of its defects and irregularities Kant's *Metaphysic of Ethics* is a fine book, in which a noble and stern conception of duty is upheld, and in which there is an attempt at least to obtain a central point of view, and to give expression to some one deep principle of man's moral nature.

As compared with Aristotle, Kant's characteristics are prominent. They consist in an intensifying to the utmost of the great modern ethical conception, the individual will. Kant says, 'The only good thing in the world is a good will.' We saw before (pp. 174 and 207) that he found fault with Aristotle for basing Ethics on eudæmonism, and for assigning a merely quantitative difference between virtue and vice. But we also saw there was a certain degree of misunderstanding in these criticisms upon Aristotle. When we look narrowly into it, we find that Aristotle asserts the only good to be 'an act of the consciousness duly harmonized;' and that if ideally he requires this to be prolonged through a life, and assisted by external good fortune, he practically speaks (*Eth.* I. x. 12; III. ix. 4) of the triumph of the internal consciousness over adverse external circumstances. Kant, then, hardly does justice to the depth of Aristotle's moral conception. But it remains true, that the starting-point of the two philosophers was broadly different—that Aristotle started with the question of his day, What is the practical chief good—or, as it is popularly called, Happiness? and only gradually, by thought and the progress of his own analysis, came to assign a definition which is really above the vulgar conception of happiness,

Kant, on the contrary, commencing with the stern and sublime idea of Duty due to the deeper thought of modern time, and wishing to free this from all considerations of external reward and happiness, comes round in the end to take in some account of consequences, and to supplement his view with the hopes of a future life—thus testifying, perhaps, that the good and the right are ultimately inseparable conceptions for Ethics. We have seen above that Aristotle's principle of 'the mean,' objected to by Kant, is a sufficient expression of the objective law of virtue, but only insufficient to express the subjective side of right action—the feeling of duty, the attitude assumed by the will and consciousness in relation to a moral act. Kant commences burthened with the notion of obligation; this he proceeds to analyze. Aristotle, writing as it were in the childhood of the world, commences with an idea of the beautiful and the good in human life and action, and of the inner joy of the human mind.

Another question of modern Ethics, also mooted by the Stoics, but developed in its full proportions since, is the question of the freedom of the will. This may have two bearings—either theological, in relation to the will of God; or metaphysical, in relation to the law of cause and effect in the order of nature. How is the freedom of the will compatible with the omnipotence of God? How is it reconcileable with the unalterable sequence of cause and effect in nature? Is the will a cause only, or is it also an effect? The various answers to these questions, in modern times, it would be out of place to discuss. The only thing to be observed here is, that the questions themselves are virtually excluded from consideration in the *Ethics* of Aristotle. That all theological or metaphysical considerations with regard to the freedom of the will should be set aside by Aristotle, and that he should have restricted himself to a mere 'Political' discussion (cf. *Eth.* III. i. 1), is

quite in keeping with the general tenour of his treatise; but it must be called a weakness. It proceeds from an uncertainty of view about the nature of Ethics—from the confusion (so often alluded to) between Ethics and Politics. We might almost say, that could Aristotle have thought and written for ten years more, this narrowness of view would have been abandoned. The question of free-will had been touched upon by Democritus, who said that 'in the whirl of necessity man was only half a slave.' Also, in the conclusion of Plato's *Republic*, we find man's responsibility asserted even in spite of the transmigration of souls. From all this aspect of the question Aristotle shuts himself out. He restricts himself to a polemic against a smaller proposition, belonging probably to the early, or Socratic Platonism—namely, that as virtue is knowledge, vice is ignorance, and therefore involuntary. Aristotle answers to this, that we act in society as if vice were free; that vice must, after all, stand on the same level as its contrary virtue; that, assuming virtue to be free, vice must be free also; that if it be said our ideas of the end (or the good) be beyond our control, that this will make virtue involuntary; and, again, it will ignore two considerations—first, that we probably contribute at all events something to our ideas of the end; second, that we are at all events free to choose our means to the end. Obviously all these different arguments might be shown to be insufficient. It might be answered, that our acting as if free in society proves nothing—that the puppet-show moves as if it were free, unless we look at the strings—that legislator, judge, and criminal may all be equally under the bands of necessity—that each individual step by which 'we form our own character' may be determined for us, so our 'contribution' to our own ideas comes to nothing—that there is no proof given of the choice of the means being free—in fact, that the idea of the end

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necessarily determines the means. We see, then, the insufficiency of all such merely practical arguments to solve a question of this magnitude and difficulty. Certainly we may live and act without solving the question of free-will; but if we ever attempt to solve it, we must do so in a philosophical spirit. Aristotle's method of dealing with the subject constitutes a difference between him and modern thinkers. No so great a philosopher as himself could, in modern times, have virtually discarded, as not necessary for Ethics, the difficulties regarding the freedom of the will. Had Aristotle's starting-point been an idea of individual responsibility, he would, in all probability, have written otherwise.

Having once known and acknowledged the deep-lying variations which exist in point of view and in spirit between any modern moral system and the early half-immature system of Aristotle,—we are the better able to deal with the traces of his influence which still remain. There is indeed so great a field of derived terms and conceptions that the sense of similarity has often overpowered the sense of difference, and people have been led still further to seek for likeness between their own views and Aristotle's, where there was only dissimilarity really existing. All systems of morals present, on their surface, terms that seem perfectly Aristotelian; the 'law of habits,' the opposition of 'the passions' and 'the reason,' 'motives,' 'principles,' 'energy,' the doctrine that 'extremes meet,' the contrast of 'moral' and 'intellectual,' the 'end of man,' and perhaps others such like are instances of words and phrases which, when we first meet them in a Greek form in Aristotle, seem to us quite familiar, so that we are apt to substitute their modern context for their original and genuine philosophic import. An examination, however, of these terms, will show that almost all of them are at all events slightly altered, and that we cannot understand Ari-

stotle without restoring to them a lost association. 'Habits' is no doubt only the Latinized form of ἔξις, but the meaning which attached to ἔξις does not remain pure in 'habit' as it is generally used. Rather it implies ἔθος, i.e. that process by which a ἔξις is formed. The 'passions' with us, though a translation of πάθη, do not quite correspond with them, they more nearly answer to the ἐπιθυμίαι of Aristotle. 'Motive' is properly the 'efficient cause' (δοτεν ἡ κίνησις), but applying it to action we use it invariably for the 'final cause' (οὐ ἕνεκα) which was Aristotle's term for the motive of an action. 'Principle,' as above mentioned (p. 218), corresponds with the ἀρχή of the practical syllogism, but according to the Peripatetic system this major premiss contained an idea of the good, while our 'principle' is meant to imply an idea of the right. 'Energy,' though identical in form with ἐνέργεια, has quite lost all notion of a contrast and correlation with δύναμις or potentiality, and implies merely the exercise of physical or moral force. In saying 'extremes meet' we forget the philosophical antithesis between the extremes and the mean, and all which that 'mean' originally implied. In translating Aristotle's ἡθικὴ ἀρετὴ by the terms 'moral virtue' we omit to notice how much all these associations connected with the individual will which go to make up our conception of 'moral,' were wanting in Aristotle's ἡθικὴ ἀρετὴ, while this, strictly speaking, might perhaps be better represented by the words 'excellence of the character,' and, as has been already made apparent, in speaking of 'the end of man,' we substitute a religious for a philosophical association.

The above-mentioned terms, however, have all a direct affinity to, and a lineal descent from, the system of Aristotle. They have only suffered that degree of change to which all language is liable, and which so many ancient words have

undergone in their transition to modern use. Modern terms of this derivative character present, for the most part, two characteristics, as contrasted with their antique originals. In the first place, they are more definite. In the second place, they are less philosophic. The philosophy, however, that once surrounded them and formed their proper context, in ebbing away from them has really sunk into the general thought of the world and become absorbed in it. If 'energy' no longer represents *ἐνέργεια*, 'actuality' and many other forms of thought contain and reproduce all that was philosophical in the original word. If 'habit' is not exactly *ἥξις*, the 'law of habits' is a received doctrine in all practical Ethics. And so in a variety of ways Aristotle has influenced our views, while our particular terms do not exactly square with his. Our words, we have said, are more definite than his. This with regard to psychological words is particularly the case. *Ψυχή*, as we have seen, is very inadequately represented by 'soul,' which, on the one hand, expresses too little, on the other hand, too much. We cannot properly translate *φρόνησις*, by 'prudence,' still less by 'conscience.' *Πολιτική* means something different from our 'politics.' *Ἀρετή* conveys a somewhat false impression when translated 'virtue.' It would be an anachronism to make 'duty' stand for *τὸ δέον*. And the most flagrant instance of all of an attempt to find modern notions among the ancients, and Christian notions among the Greeks, is where persons have thought that they have discovered in one or two places of Aristotle's *Ethics* the doctrine of 'human corruption.'

It is only by an effort of mind, and not immediately, or at first sight, that we can understand Aristotle's *Ethics*, as they really are. It is a difficult task to throw aside our associations and views, which all belong to what Bacon calls the 'old age of the world,' and to go back to the era of Alexander, and put

ourselves into the position of this early but deeply-penetrating thinker. We have seen that much of his thought has been amalgamated with our own. There is much else in the profounder parts of his Ethical system, which is, when properly discerned and felt, a real revelation with regard to human life. Taken as a whole, however, when we consider this noble treatise in relation to modern thought, we feel there is something about it that stands apart from ourselves; that its main interest is historical; that we look back on it as on an ancient building shining in the fresh light of an Athenian morning.

## APPENDIX A.

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### *On the Ethical Method of Aristotle.*

SOME notice of Aristotle's Ethical method seems necessary for completeness;—it is a subject too long for a note and too short for an Essay, and may be briefly dispatched here. Incidentally we have already alluded to several characteristics of his point of view. And in the last resort a philosopher's method, whatever be the subject or science, depends on the whole bearing of his mind and thought. With regard to Ethics, we may first observe, that while Aristotle seems to occupy himself much with the logic of the science, and the question, What is its appropriate method? he is quite tentative and uncertain, and to some extent confused, in all he directly answers to this question. In the second place, we may notice that his method unconsciously declares itself, not in the abstract but in the concrete, throughout the pages of his treatise.

At the very outset of his work, in the first seven chapters, he has no less than three digressions on the logic of Ethics. In the first (*Eth.* I. iii. 1—4), he cautions his readers against expecting too much ἀκρίβεια in the present science. This term ἀκρίβεια (see the notes on *Eth.* I. vii. 18), seems to imply both mathematical exactness and also metaphysical subtlety. The Ethical treatise of Spinoza might be said to exhibit ἀκρίβεια in both senses of the word, on account of its demonstrative statement, combined with its metaphysical character.



of thought. Kant's system, without aiming at a mathematical method, might be called ἀκριβής, on account of its speculative depth of view. The question then is, of how much ἀκριβεία is this 'branch of Politics' (πολιτική τις) capable? Aristotle tells us, that 'the matters of which it treats—virtue and justice—have so much about them that is fluctuating and uncertain, as even to have given rise to the opinion that they are only conventional distinctions. Hence, with such conceptions on which to reason, we cannot expect demonstrative and exact conclusions, we must be content with rough and general theories.' It is to be observed here, that Aristotle departs from the point of view with which he had started. He started with an *a priori* conception of the End-in-itself, which 'must be identical with the chief good for man.' Here he goes off into another point of view—that which looks at action from the outside, recognizes the variations in the details of action, and allows the empirical casuistry of the Sophists to have an influence in determining the character of his science.

In his second digression upon this topic (*Eth.* i. iv. 5) he shows even more plainly a tentative and uncertain attitude. He says, 'We must not forget the distinction drawn by Plato between the two methods of science—the method which proceeds *from* principles, and that which proceeds *to* principles. The question is, Which must we adopt at present? We must begin, at all events, with things known. But again, things are *known* in two ways, absolutely and relatively. Perhaps *we* may be content to begin with what *we* know (*i.e.*, relative and not absolute truths). Hence the necessity of a good moral training previous to the study of this science. For one who has been so trained is in possession of facts which either already do, or soon can, stand in the light of principles.' In this passage there appears to be more than one play upon words:—(1) In saying, '*we* must begin with what *we* know,'

there is a sort of bantering implication that the method of Ethics must be inductive, starting from relative and individual facts. But there is a fallacy in such an insinuation, because, though the individual must begin with what 'he knows,' there is nothing to prevent an absolute truth ( $\tau\delta\ \acute{\alpha}\pi\lambda\omega\varsigma\ \gamma\upsilon\omega\rho\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu$ ) forming part of the intuitions and experience of the individual. (2) There appears to be a play on the word  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta$ ; for while Aristotle implies that the procedure must be *to* principles, and not starting from them, he says, on the other hand, that 'the fact is a principle.' Now, this may mean two things; either that 'a moral fact or perception really amounts to a law.' But, in this case, the science of Ethics, beginning with moral facts, really begins  $\acute{\alpha}\pi'\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\omega\upsilon$ . Or, again, it may mean, that 'the fact is a beginning or starting-point for discussion.' In this latter case the word,  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta$ , should not have been used, as it introduces a confusion into the present passage—the upshot of which, on the whole, seems to be, to assert in a very wavering way that Ethics must be inductive rather than deductive, and must commence with experience of particulars rather than with intuitions of the universal.

The third digression on the same subject occurs *Eth.* i. vii. 17—21, where Aristotle points out his definition of the chief good as 'a sketch to be filled up;' and also, it would appear, as an  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta$  or leading principle, which in importance amounts to 'more than half the whole' science. In filling up the sketch, he again cautions us that too much  $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\rho\iota\beta\epsilon\iota\alpha$  is not to be expected. But it is plain that he has deserted his former view of the science as inductive; he now makes it depend on a general conception of the chief good, which is to be applied and developed.

Elsewhere in the *Ethics* Aristotle appears puzzled how to deal with the casuistry of his subject. He says (*Eth.* ii. ii.

3—4) that 'the actions and the interests of men exhibit no fixed rule, no more than the conditions of health do; and if this is the case with the universal theory, still more is the theory of particular acts incapable of being exactly fixed, for it falls under the domain of no art or regimen, but the actors themselves must always watch what suits the occasion, as is the way with the physician's and the pilot's art. And yet, though the theory is of such a kind, we must do what we can to help it out.' He reverts to the same point of view, *Eth.* ix. ii. 6, mentioning some casuistical difficulties, and saying, it is impossible to give a fixed rule on such points.

Much as Aristotle speaks of the logic of science, when we come to examine his real procedure, we find how little he is influenced by his own abstract rules of method. It has been sometimes said that his *Ethics* exhibits a perfect specimen of the analytic method. But this is not really true. The discussions are very frequently of an analytic character, different parts and elements of human life are treated separately, and indeed are not sufficiently considered in their mutual relationship. But the leading principles of the science are not obtained by this sort of analysis, there is not by any means a procedure ἐν ἀρχαίς. Aristotle's bias of mind was only on one side analytical, he was on the other side deeply speculative and synthetic, and viewed all the world as reduced to unity under certain forms of thought, and, as we have said before, every philosopher's modes and forms of thought, his genius, his breadth of view, and his power of penetration, will constitute in reality his logic of science and his method of discovery.

Aristotle's Ethical system, as we saw more in detail in Essay IV., depends on certain profound *a priori* conceptions, end, form, and actuality. We are enabled to some extent to trace how these conceptions grew up out of Platonism, but in their

ultimate depth and force they must be regarded as lightning-flashes from the genius of Aristotle. These great ideas, by which human life is explained, are no mere results of an induction, no last development of experience, rather they come in from above, and for the first time give some meaning to experience. Aristotle shows how his definition of the chief good includes all the previous notices of the requisitions for happiness. But his definition is not derived from combining these, nor yet from any analysis of happiness in the concrete, but from an inner intuition of a law of good as manifested in life. The same procedure manifests itself throughout. Whatever use Aristotle may make of his *ἀπόρριαι*, of appeals to language and experience, of the authority of the many and the few, these are only means of testing, correcting, illustrating, and amplifying his conceptions, and not the source from whence they spring. However, it is just the maintenance of this constant reconciliation with experience and with popular points of view that is the characteristic of Aristotle's method, as distinguished from Plato's. That it gives rise at times to an empirical and unphilosophical mode of writing, we have had more than once an opportunity of observing. But it is Aristotle's strength as well as his weakness. His width of mind, which is as distinguished as its profundity, enabled him to sum up all the knowledge of ancient times, as well as all its philosophy. Bacon accuses him of being 'a dogmatic,' and of resembling the Ottoman princes who killed all their brethren before they could reign themselves. This accusation is an invidious and utterly unfair way of stating the real case. Aristotle is 'a dogmatic,' inasmuch as his philosophy is *γνωριστική οὐ περαστική*, conclusive, and not merely starting the questions. Also he shows the relationship of all previous philosophies and contemporary opinions to his own system, by which he does not so much 'kill his brethren' as demonstrate

that they are evidently 'younger brethren,' leaving his own right to the throne indefeasible. If in the term 'dogmatist' arrogance or assumption is implied, this would not be true either of his style of writing, or tone of thought. And he is by no means dogmatic on all points; on some, as we have already seen (in Essay V.), he declines to decide.

## APPENDIX B.

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### *On the ἑξωτερικοὶ λόγοι.*

THERE is a question of minor importance which has still been thought worthy of a good deal of discussion, namely, what is meant by the *ἑξωτερικοὶ λόγοι*, which Aristotle occasionally mentions? We are told by Aulus Gellius (xx. 5) that Aristotle, the master of Alexander of Macedon, had two sorts of teaching, and that his writings admit of a twofold division. That in the morning he used to give to intimate disciples instructions, which were called Acroatic, in the deeper parts of philosophy; that in the afternoon he gave discourses which were called exoteric, to the public in general. That Alexander, hearing that the Acroatic discourses had been published, wrote from the East to complain of what had been done, since he 'should now have no superiority over the vulgar;' and that Aristotle replied that 'the treatises, though published, were not published, since nobody would understand them.'

When we look this story in the face, and ask what is its historical foundation, how much of it can be relied on?—one fact alone seems to remain with any stability, and that is, that the words *ἑξωτερικοὶ λόγοι* are occasionally used in the writings of Aristotle. All the rest is a mere fabrication put together to adorn the rhetorical topic of the relationship of Aristotle to Alexander. When we consider that Alexander was a mere boy when Aristotle was his tutor—that he probably learnt from him Homer and mathematics—that Aristotle

himself speaks of the impossibility of a boy being a proficient in ethics, physics, or philosophy—that even these early years of instruction were broken by domestic troubles and the premature cares of state—that Aristotle was working out for himself, up to the time of his death, the deeper parts of his philosophy, and could not have had it ready, like a sort of mystery, to reveal to his pupil—when we consider all this, we may well come to the conclusion that Alexander knew no more of the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle than any soldier in his army; and that as the latter part of the story is a fabrication, so the former is not worthy of the very least reliance. In short, we have not any sufficient ground for believing in the above-mentioned division of the teaching of Aristotle, and we still have to ask afresh for ourselves, what does he mean by the *ἐξωτερικοὶ λόγοι*?

We have already (p. 5) accepted the tradition of Cicero that Aristotle wrote certain exoteric, that is, popular discourses. We saw that their first characteristic, as compared with the philosophical works, was that they were finished in point of style. Cicero was probably acquainted with these better than with the more difficult remains of Aristotle. He mentions other characteristics of them, namely, that they had proems to them; he says, in writing to Atticus, ‘*Quoniam in singulis libris utor procæmiis, ut Aristoteles in iis, quos ἱζωτερικοὺς vocat.*’ Now we can trust Cicero about the proems; but about the more subtle point of interest, that Aristotle *called some of his own works* exoteric, he is not a sufficiently discriminating authority to be relied on. In another of his letters, (*Ep. ad Famil.* I. 9) he speaks of his three books, *De Oratore*, as ‘a dialogue in the style of Aristotle.’ And again (*Ep. ad Atticum*, XIII. 9) he says that he has copied Aristotle, ‘who in his dialogues always assigns to himself the leading part in the conversation.’ We have now gained some idea of the appear-

ance of Aristotle's popular works, as they were read by Cicero. The names probably of some of them, as, for instance, the '*Gryllus*,' &c., are preserved in the list of Diogenes Laertius, but the works themselves are all lost. The question then is, does Aristotle refer to this class of his writings under the name of οἱ ἑξωτερικοὶ λόγοι?

The great *a priori* improbability of such a thing is almost a sufficient answer to the question. For though it is conceivable that a philosopher should in certain higher and more rhetorical dialogues (which might be analogous to a novel written in moments of relaxation by a philosopher of modern times) quote and appeal to his own scientific treatises,—it is quite inconceivable that he should in those scientific treatises appeal for the support of any doctrines to his 'exoteric works.' And when we look to particular passages where the references to the ἑξωτερικοὶ λόγοι occur, it becomes still more manifest, from several little indications, that Aristotle cannot be quoting his own dialogues.

In *Eth.* I. xiii. 9, in speaking of the ψυχή, he says, λέγεται δὲ περὶ αὐτῆς καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἑξωτερικοῖς λόγοις ἀρκούντως ἔνια καὶ χρηστίον αὐτοῖς· οἷον τὸ μὲν ἄλογον αὐτῆς εἶναι, τὸ δὲ λόγον ἔχον. In this not only is there the *a priori* improbability of Aristotle's referring for a psychological division on which so much of his *Ethics* is based, to a merely popular set of dialogues written by himself; but also we see at once the unlikelihood of his having summed up his own popular works under one head, and spoken of them as 'the exoteric treatises,'—this would imply a sort of completeness about the 'Works of Aristotle' suitable to times like those of Cicero, when editions of these works had been before the world for two hundred years, and when a recent recension had been made by Andronicus, but utterly unsuitable to Aristotle's own lifetime, and his own feeling about his multifarious,



but uncompleted labours. Again, the word λέγεται is in the manner of a general reference and not a special quotation. Again, the word καὶ prefixed to ἐν τοῖς ἐξ. λόγ., as it invariably is by Aristotle, implies a sort of disparagement, not natural in a writer appealing for arguments to others of his own writings. In short, it is obvious that here Aristotle says that 'even in popular accounts there is a sufficiently accurate division of the ψυχῇ,' which he will 'make use of' for his present purposes. This same interpretation of οἱ ἐξωτερικοὶ λόγοι to mean 'unscientific talk,' theories and opinions belonging to the outer world, outside the schools of philosophy—will be found to hold good in the other four places where the terms are used by Aristotle. We will subjoin them without comment.

(1) *Metaphys.* XIII. i. 4. Σκεπτόν πρῶτον μὲν περὶ τῶν μαθηματικῶν, ἔπειτα μετὰ ταῦτα χωρὶς περὶ τῶν ἰδεῶν αὐτῶν ἀπλῶς καὶ ὅσον νόμου χάριν· τεθρύλληται γὰρ τὰ πολλὰ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐξωτερικῶν λόγων.

(2) *Nat. Ausc.* IV. x. 1. Ἐχόμενον δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων ἐστὶ περὶ χρόνου ἐπελθεῖν· πρῶτον δὲ καλῶς ἔχει διαπορῆσαι περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ διὰ τῶν ἐξωτερικῶν λόγων (even from the popular point of view) πότερον τῶν ὄντων ἐστὶν ἢ τῶν μὴ ὄντων. Ἐῖτα τίς ἡ φύσις αὐτοῦ.

(3) *Politics*, III. iv. 4. Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοὺς λεγομένους τρόπους ράδιον διελεῖν· καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἐξωτερικοῖς λόγοις διοριζόμεθα περὶ αὐτῶν πολλάκις.

(4) *Politics*, VII. i. 2. Διὸ δεῖ πρῶτον ὁμολογεῖσθαι, τίς ὁ πᾶσιν ὡς εἰπεῖν αἰρετώτατος βίος· μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο, πότερον κοινῇ καὶ χωρὶς ὁ αὐτὸς ἢ ἕτερος. Νομίσαντες οὖν ἰκανῶς πολλὰ λέγεσθαι καὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἐξωτερικοῖς λόγοις περὶ τῆς ἀρίστης ζωῆς καὶ νῦν χρηστέον αὐτοῖς. The last passage does not contain as some think a reference to the *Ethics*, but rather an exact parallel to the way of speaking quoted above, *Eth.* I. xiii.

9. Aristotle proceeds not to give any doctrine established in the *Ethics*, but to collect certain popular and universally received conceptions of happiness. In addition to these places of Aristotle, we may mention three passages in which Eudemus uses the terms ἐξ. λόγ. One of these occurs *Eth. Eud.* II. i. 1, where the writer speaks of the threefold division of goods, as a popular division, (καθάπερ διαιρούμεθα καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐξωτερικοῖς λόγοις). In another (*Eth. Eud.* I. viii. 4) he says that the doctrine of Ideas has been variously discussed, both philosophically and from a popular point of view (καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐξωτερικοῖς λόγοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν). In the Eudemian book (*Eth.* VI. iv. 1) it is said that the popular distinction between 'action' and 'production' is quite sufficient, (ἕτερον δ' ἐστὶ ποίησις καὶ πρᾶξις. Πιστεύομεν δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖς ἐξωτερικοῖς λόγοις.)

Another term used by Aristotle in exactly the same sense as ἐξωτερικοὶ λόγοι, is ἐγκύκλιοι λόγοι, for an explanation of which see the note on *Eth.* I. v. 7, in Vol. II.

## APPENDIX C.

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### *On the Political Ideas in the Ethics of Aristotle.*

IT may seem a strange omission that, while we have so often alluded to Aristotle's identification or confusion of Ethics with Politics, we have never specified any very important consequences of this view; except, indeed, that we have noticed sometimes a restricted mode of dealing with certain questions, more appropriate to Politics than to philosophy. It remains then to ask, were there any such consequences? Does Aristotle write on Ethics differently because he considered that his science was a kind of Politics? Is the individual in his eyes always regarded as a citizen? Do his views of law, the state, and different questions of the constitution influence his views upon moral action? Every one will be ready to answer that such effects are hardly traceable. We read the *Ethics* as containing discussions on happiness, virtue, friendship, pleasure, and philosophy; we find it replete with anthropology, dealing with the heights and the depths of the human consciousness, and quite away from any consideration of the welfare of masses of mankind. Happiness, as here described, does not depend on any particular constitution or form of government. Aristotle, indeed, specifies the various forms of government, and declares which is the best among them (*Eth.* viii. x.), but this is only for the purpose of illustration, for the sake of comparing the different degrees of equality in various kinds of friendship, with the different degrees of liberty in various forms of the constitution. Aristotle's entering into detail here with regard to the

governments is not so much a mark of consistency in preserving a political point of view, but rather it is a want of art and an entrenchment upon the subject of Politics proper. It would be called too long a digression, supposing there were a settled co-ordination of subject between the different parts of Aristotle's system. A still greater entrenchment on the province of Politics occurs in the theory of justice given in Book V. It is remarkable that this book, in all probability by Eudemus, sets forth a closer dependence of moral on political principles than any other book in the *Ethics*. Eudemus, as we saw before (p. 17), does not at the outset, like Aristotle, commence under the name of Politics. But in Book V. he probably merely reproduced in perhaps a somewhat garbled form, the theory of Aristotle. Justice is here defined according to principles of Jurisprudence and Political Economy. To make these a part of morals would be a confusion we should never now fall into; though we might confess that it would be hard to give the ethical idea of justice its full content without appealing to these extraneous sciences.

Other allusions to Politics occur (*Eth.* I. xiii. 2) where he says, that 'the true politician must study the nature of virtue;' (III. i. 1) where he says, that 'a theory of the voluntary and involuntary will be useful to legislators;' (VII. xi. 1) where it is said, that 'it belongs to the political philosopher to consider pleasure, since he is the architect of the End-in-itself.' (VIII. i. 4) 'Friendship holds states together; legislators seem more anxious for this than for justice.' Lastly, we have the most remarkable place of all, when at the conclusion of his ethical treatise (x. ix. 8), he makes the transition to Politics proper, by saying that 'for virtue, not only nature, but habits and teaching are requisite, and these last must be provided by the state. Hence,' he says, 'the nurture and the discipline should be fixed by law, and use will make them easy. Not

only, perhaps, ought men while youths to receive good discipline, but also we want laws about their conduct when they are grown up; and, in short, about the whole of life. For the many will rather obey necessity than reason, punishment than the inducements of the beautiful.'

With these evidences before us, let us now sum up the bearing of Aristotle's political thought upon what we now call his *Ethics*. There seems to be an analogy between Aristotle's views of man in relation to the state, and his views of man in relation to nature. We have seen before (Essay V.) that in his *Physics* he considers man as part of nature, and because he is a part, inferior to and less divine than the heaven and the universe; so, too, in his political system, he considers the state prior to and greater than the individual (*Politics*, I. ii. 13), just as the whole is prior to and greater than the part. The individual without the state has no meaning; the state must be presupposed; man is not a whole in himself (*αὐτάρκης*), he is born to live in relationship to others (*πολιτικός*), if he lived alone he must be either more or less than man (*ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός*). Just as Aristotle said, 'the universe is diviner than man,' so he says, 'the End for the state is diviner than that for the individual.' Politics, then, is the greatest science, the legislator is an *ἀρχιτέκτων*, a master builder laying the plan of that greatest practical thing, a fitly framed human society. This idea, if it were carried out, would tend to overwhelm all individuality. It actually does so in Plato's *Republic*, and the last-quoted passage (*Eth.* x. ix. 8) is a reproduction of the same feeling as Plato's. The laws are to regulate the whole of life, and to force a good discipline on those who would not choose virtue for its own sake. This idea then forms one side of Aristotle's view, it is a sort of background to his ethical system. The End for the state, as he depicts it (see above, p. 178), is something almost mystical, it is like the

identification of state and church. But the other side of his view is that which seems forced on him by the truth, as soon as he commences a course of ethical inquiries. It consists in an acknowledgment to the full of the absolute worth of the individual consciousness. Not only is a reaction thus made against the system of Plato, but also by the whole treatment which Aristotle gives his subject, Ethics is virtually and forever separated from Politics.

THE END.

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